# THE GOSPEL UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Mennonite World Conference
528 East Madison Street
Lombard, Illinois 60148

# The Gospel Under the Southern Cross

A History of the
Argentine Mennonite Mission of
South America, Celebrating
Its Twenty-fifth Anniversary, 1917-1942

By J. W. Shank - T. K. Hershey
D. Parke Lantz - Nelson Litwiller
Elvin Snyder - L. S. Weber

Including Short Sketches by Other Missionaries
and Argentine Christians

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*To all contributors*
*to the Argentine Mennonite Mission*
*especially to Noah Graybill who gave the first ten dollars;*
*to J. S. Hartzler*
*chief promoter of the Mission prior to its beginning;*
*to C. Z. Yoder, J. S. Shoemaker, and G. L. Bender*
*officers of the Mission Board*
*at the time of the beginning of the Mission, and*
*to S. C. Yoder and Samuel H. Musselman*
*who visited the Mission in its infancy and*
*thereafter gave their heartiest sympathy and help*
*this volume is lovingly dedicated*

# PREFACE

This volume is not a complete history of the Argentine Mennonite Mission. It is rather a summary in narrative and picture designed to depict for you a bit of the background and environment, together with a few glimpses of the activities of your representatives in South America during a quarter of a century of effort in evangelism.

We believe that a picture of the Argentine Mennonite Mission covering its twenty-five years of existence is needed for our church at this time. Even the mission study books relative to this work are out of date. Articles have been written and published in our church papers during all the years. Annual reports have been published year after year. These, however, had to do only with the events of short periods of time. What we have aimed to do in the present volume is to present a unified picture of the entire period of years. We hope it will mean something to our brethren in the homeland to read the book and reflect upon the significance of a mission to a foreign people and also its significance to the churches in the United States and Canada for having made this mission a possibility. This period of years, 1917 to 1942, has been one of tremendous significance in world history. It spans the generation between one great world war and another. The world is again in a turmoil, such as existed in 1917. But in spite of such changes in the political, social, and religious conditions among the nations, in spite of great waves of financial successes and periods of disastrous depression, our little mission in far-off Argentina has continued with a normal growth in both a spiritual and a material sense.

The missionaries who have had a part in the South American work will feel satisfied and grateful to God if this volume will serve the purpose of inspiring our friends in the home churches to greater missionary interest and greater activity in the promotion of missions in all parts of the world. We realize that our mission in Argentina is only one little corner in this great world. May God speed the day when the Gospel light will dawn upon every people and every land through the efforts of His messengers.

J. W. SHANK

# INTRODUCTION

THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE is a glorious adventure! The work of reclaiming broken men and women is the noblest and highest of all the professions open to man. The task is not without difficulties and hardships—it never was. At best it calls for a denial of self and many of the comforts of life. It calls also for separation from friends and ways of living to which one has been accustomed from childhood. Modern conveniences, ways of travel, and means of communication have removed many of the physical discomforts that formerly had to be endured, but a new set of problems no less trying, and even more baffling, have risen to challenge the best abilities and graces of those who give themselves to the work.

The work of the missionary leads to the home of the poor, often to the hovel of the wretched, to places where sin breeds and brings forth debased and degraded men and women, whose blighted lives are shrouded in darkness with no hope and no comfort. It leads to the home of the lonely, the abandoned wife or mother or children for whom life holds only emptiness, sorrow, and sadness, for which the world has no remedy and no balm. Or it may lead to the other levels where there are those who have learned that neither wealth, nor wisdom, nor learning, nor leisure, nor power, nor position can satisfy the deepest longings of the soul.

But whatever direction he may go, the missionary may be sure that the One who has called him to this service has trod the way before. He will feel no heart pangs that He has not felt, he will know no weariness, nor heaviness that He has not known, and he will see no misery and no sadness that He has not known and seen.

Long ago when He, who was sent from God, was about to take leave of His followers, He asked the Father to send them (the disciples) into the world as He (Christ) had been sent, with a clear conception of their mission and with access to the same knowledge and power that was made available to Him. Those who have gone forth in faith claiming these gifts have been amply repaid.

All through the centuries there have been great souls who followed in their Master's footsteps. They have not only kept His word alive but have scattered it far and wide among men. They belong to the illustrious group of whom the psalmist said, "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." Through the effort of these has come a large body of the redeemed of God through Christ the Lord whose lives have been transformed and made new. They have changed the spirit of the communities in which they lived; they have added sweetness to the bitterness of life; they have given hope to the hopeless, comfort to the comfortless, and joy to those who knew only despair and sorrow.

In that great company are those who pioneered in all the mission fields in the world, whether at home or abroad. At the top of the list of those who took up this cross stands the great apostle—Saul of Tarsus—who counted himself the least of them all. Close to him are the other eleven whose names are known to all who love the Lord, and in the centuries following there appears a long list of names that have become immortal because of the cross they bore for the sake of their faith in Him whose star has lighted the way through the centuries. In more modern times we find the names of Carey, Judson, Morrison, Livingstone, Moffat, and Thompson—what an array of saints —who have opened the way anew to lands and people over which darkness brooded and where sin abounded for millenniums.

Into that small sector of the world's great harvest field to which Thompson went in 1820, came a small band of Mennonite pioneers almost a hundred years later (1917) to begin a work for the Mennonite Church in the name of Christ their Redeemer. During the twenty-five years since this effort began they have met up with all the experiences that missionaries usually encounter. There have been disappointments and defeats. There have been sickness and death in the missionary ranks as well as among those who were reclaimed through the preaching of the Word. But there have been victories, too, and abundant reasons for rejoicing. That small group of four that landed in Buenos Aires in 1917 has since increased to twenty-five besides

the workers chosen from among the Argentine Christians, of which there are many who are active in propagating "the faith once delivered to the saints." Churches and mission stations have increased until now they number more than a score and those who have been redeemed by His grace are counted by the hundreds.

The Mennonite work in Argentina is young and the field is difficult, but the Church has established herself and many of those who have made their peace with Him are noble witnesses of the saving grace of God. To them the missionary can point and say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and in the language of the great apostle we pray, "That he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

This volume contains a review of the twenty-five years of services which the missionaries and their helpers have rendered in this field. It contains a history of the work and summary of its progress. It includes a record of the experiences of the workers and testimonies from those who have heard and answered the call of the Lord through the messages of grace which have been delivered unto them. As a church we of North America reach our hands across the continents that lie between us to receive this body of believers below the tropics into a fellowship that knows no racial or national lines but which is one undivided brotherhood in Christ, who has made us all of one blood and who has redeemed us by His grace.

S. C. YODER, Secretary
Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities

Goshen, Indiana
November 1942

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS


J. S. Hartzler, Noah Graybill, S. C. Yoder, Samuel H. Musselman..... 2
Map of First Voyages to South America..... 8
Map of Argentina..... 16
Scenes from South America..... 18
Scenes of Argentine Life..... 20
Occupations in Argentina..... 22
Scenes of Argentine Life..... 28
Scenes from Paraguay and Chile..... 32
Pehuajó Church, Clinic, School, Emma Hershey Shank's Grave..... 36
Trenque Lauquen Mission Printery and Church..... 40
Buildings in Carlos Casáres..... 46
Tres Lomas and Carlos Casáres Pictures..... 50
Bragado Church, Sunday-School Groups, and Members..... 54
Work at Quiroga, America, Pellegrini, and Santa Rosa..... 58
Cosquín Church and Congregation and Quiroga Chapel..... 68
Group in Buenos Aires, Mission Hall at La Falda, and Native Argentines of Villegas..... 74
Seven Different Nationalities of the Argentine Mission..... 80
Three Annual Conferences: 1922, 1928, 1939..... 90
Scenes at Young People's Retreat.....110
Tent Campaigns.....126
The Orphanage at Bragado.....129
Bible School Students: 1936, 1942.....136
Scenes of the Orphanage and Bragado.....142
THE MISSIONARIES: T. K. and Mae Hershey, Emma Hershey Shank, and J. W. and Selena Gamber Shank.....170
D. Parke and Lillie Lantz, William G. and Florence Lauver, and Vera Hallman.....176
Amos and Edna Swartzentruber, J. L. and Mary Rutt, Nelson and Ada Litwiller.....180
Elvin and Mary F. Snyder, Elsa Shank Castillo, and L. S. and Edna B. Weber.....188
William E. and Beatrice H. Hallman, T. H. and Rowena L. Brenneman, and Una Cressman.....196
C. L. and Frances L. Holderman and Samuel E. and Ella May Miller....200
THE MISSIONARIES' CHILDREN: Pablo and Robert Shank, Elsa Shank Castillo, and Lester T. Hershey.....172
Mary Lou, Glen, Elton, Lois, and Paul Lauver, Ruth Eileen Rutt, and Clemens, Richard, and Elinor Hallman.....178
Elizabeth and Marion Snyder, Lawrence and Donald Holderman, Carmen Snyder, and John, Eunice, Esther, Beulah, and Lois Litwiller.....184
Doris, Anita, and Orley Swartzentruber, and Patricia and Donald Brenneman.....192
First Baptized Member and Missionary Groups.....210
The Bulletin Board, Argentine Mennonite Publications, and Telegrams.....240
ARGENTINE NATIONAL WORKERS: Pablo and Marcelina M. de Cavadore, Constancio and Herlinda de Herrera, and Carlos and Celina H. de Barbosa.....260
Juan and Isabel P. de Battaglia, Albano Luayza and Family, Anita Cavadore, and Maria Cavadore.....266
Ernesto and Pilar F. de Piñeyro, Elvira Armenino, Laura Rivas, Jose Zagami, Quintina Gutierez, Juan and Isabel P. de Battaglia, Santina C. de Monsalvo, Angelita D'Amatto.....270

# CONTENTS


I. Looking Southward ..... 1
Contributions for South America ..... 3
The First Action of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities ..... 3
Off for South America ..... 4
Reporting to the Board ..... 10
Out Among the Churches ..... 11
The South American Mission Movement Takes a Rest ..... 11
A Real Step Forward ..... 12
Why to Argentina? ..... 12
The Sailing ..... 13
The Sojourn in Buenos Aires ..... 14
II. A Field Ready for Harvest ..... 17
The Great Central Region ..... 17
The Original Inhabitants ..... 21
European Colonists ..... 21
The Argentine Gaucho ..... 21
More Recent History ..... 23
The Character of the People ..... 23
The Religious Character of the People ..... 25
The Church of Rome in Argentina ..... 26
Moral Conditions in Argentina ..... 27
The Language of Argentina ..... 29
Missionary Occupation of the Field ..... 30
Town and Country Life of Today ..... 31
Great Land, Argentina ..... 34
III. The Great Task Begun ..... 35
Pehuajó (1919) ..... 35
Trenque Lauquen (1920) ..... 39
Santa Rosa (1921) ..... 45
Carlos Casáres (1922) ..... 47
Francisco Madero (1923) ..... 49
Tres Lomas (1925) ..... 51
America (1926) ..... 52
Meridiano Quinto (1926) ..... 55
Bragado (1926) ..... 55
Mechita (1926) ..... 56
Passo (1929) ..... 57
Pellegrini (1930) ..... 59
Treinta (30) de Agosto (1930) ..... 61
Maza (1931) ..... 61
Moctezuma (1931) ..... 62
Smith (1932) ..... 63
Alberti (1933) ..... 63

Guanaco (1933) ..... 65
Lonquimay (1933) ..... 65
Martinez de Hoz (1933) ..... 66
Quiroga (1934) ..... 66
Cosquín, Córdoba, and District (1935) ..... 67
La Falda ..... 69
Capilla Del Monte ..... 69
French (1935) ..... 70
O'Brien (1936) ..... 71
La Niña (1939) ..... 71
Buenos Aires (1941) ..... 72
General Villegas (1941) ..... 73
Ameghino (1941) ..... 76
Salto (1941) ..... 76
Rojas ..... 77
A Call to Argentina ..... 78
IV. OUR ARGENTINE CHURCHES ..... 79
Distinct Characteristics and Problems ..... 79
Converts ..... 81
Why Not More Members? ..... 83
Practice ..... 85
Church Offerings ..... 86
Pastors' Meeting ..... 87
The Church Conference ..... 88
General Conference ..... 91
Ordinations ..... 92
Properties and Church Buildings ..... 95
Departments of Church Work ..... 103
V. EXTENSION THROUGH EVANGELISM ..... 113
Preparatory Work ..... 114
Personal Evangelism—The One-by-One Method ..... 117
Personal Evangelism by the Pastor ..... 121
Preaching Evangelism ..... 122
VI. OUR INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR PROGRAMS ..... 130
The Kindergarten ..... 131
The Bible School ..... 134
The Orphanage ..... 141
The Printery ..... 150
The Clinic ..... 152
The Old People's Home ..... 154
VII. PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION AND FINANCE ..... 155
Financial Help from the Board ..... 155
The 20-Year Plan ..... 158
Rotating Building Fund ..... 161
Bishop Zones ..... 162
District Superintendents ..... 162
Mission Council ..... 163

## CONTENTS


Congregational Responsibility....164
Outside Material Aid....165
VIII. THE MISSIONARIES....167
Josephus Wenger Shank....167
Emma Elizabeth Hershey Shank....168
Tobias K. Hershey....171
Mae Elizabeth Hershey....173
David Parke Lantz....174
Lillian Forrey Lantz....175
William Graybill Lauver....175
Florence Byler Lauver....177
Amos Swartzentruber....179
Edna Litwiller Swartzentruber....179
Jacob L. Rutt....181
Mary Herr Rutt....182
Veronica (Vera) Hallman....182
Selena Gamber Shank, R. N....183
Nelson Litwiller....185
Ada Ramseyer Litwiller....186
Elvin Valores Snyder....186
Mary Adah Fretz Snyder....189
Lewis Shantz Weber....189
Edna Bowman Weber....191
Elsa Lois Shank Castillo....191
William Eli Hallman....193
Beatrice Hershey Hallman....194
Timothy H. Brenneman....195
Rowena Jesse Leedy Brenneman....197
Calvin Lawrence Holderman, R. N....197
Frances Leake Holderman....198
Una Cressman, R. N....199
Samuel Ebersole Miller....201
Ella May Weaver Miller....201
IX. REMINISCENCES OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS....203
His First Prayer....203
A Slip of the Tongue....204
How to Get Your Goat....204
The Trend of "Injustice"....204
Disposing of Useless Baggage....205
An Ambassador Interceded for Us....206
In the Police Station....207
First Experience Selling Bibles....208
Suitcase Robbed....209
The Balky Horse....211
A Woman of the Hills....212
The Smiling Face....213
The Young Indian Convert....214

## Contents


At the Foot of the Volcano Osborno....215
All Missionaries Are Not Doctors, But—....215
An Experience with the Sick....216
God's Protecting Hand....217
An Interrupted Baptismal Service at Tres Lomas....218
Water, Water, Everywhere!....219
The Tent Campaign in General O'Brien....220
An Incident....221
The Homegoing of a Bible Reader's Mother....222
An Experience with a Spiritualist....223
Coming Home from Annual Conference....224
Roadside Dentistry....225
The Remarkable Conversion of an Entire Family....226
Satan Makes Trouble....228
Two Girls Disagree....228
"Not So Old Yet"....229
Obedience....229
"Nice Dago"....230
Forgiving....230
X. Our Mission and the Government....231
Incorporation Papers....231
Tax Exemption....232
Annual Reports....233
New Codes for Foreign Associations....235
Periodicals, "El Camino Verdadero"....236
Police Permit....237
Military Service....239
The Political Situation and the National Spirit....242
Some of the Publications of Our Printery....244
Translation of Telegrams....245
XI. Changes in Twenty-Five Years....246
Changes in the Mission and Christian Community....246
Changes in Town and Country Life....248
Changes in Roads and Travel....252
Conclusion....253
XII. The Future Argentine Mennonite Church (Opinions of the Argentine National Workers)....254
By Elvira Armenino....255
By Albano Luayza....256
By Ernesto Piñeyro....257
By Feliciano Gorjón....258
By Pablo Cavadore....261
By Constancio Herrera....262
By Carlos Barbosa....263
By Anita Cavadore....264
Biographical Sketches of Argentine National Workers....265

CHAPTER I

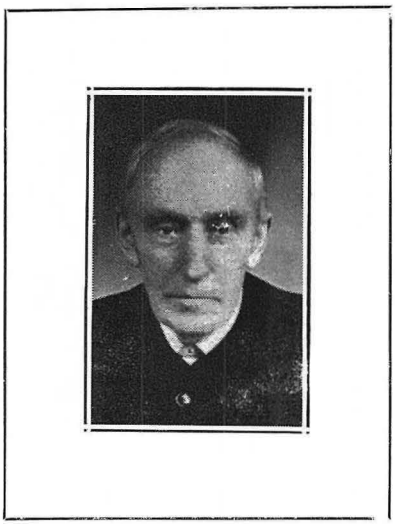
# LOOKING SOUTHWARD

## BY J. W. SHANK

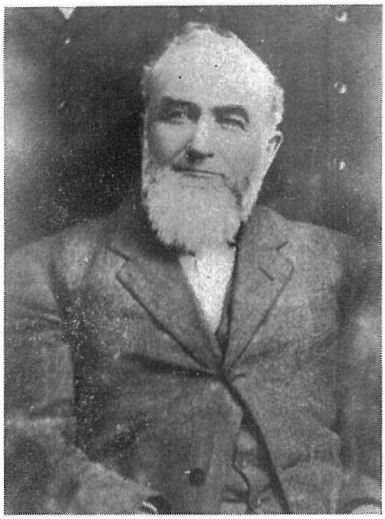
"BEHOLD I HAVE SET BEFORE THEE AN OPEN DOOR." How often the words of the above text have served to inspire Christian men and women as they became acquainted with some field of spiritual need! Information is necessary to create interest and enthusiasm. When once we know of the existence of a neighboring continent where millions of Indians live in ignorance and paganism and where many more millions of mixed races have lived for centuries in idolatrous superstition under the name of religion, then our hearts go out in sympathy to them in their need.

In the early years of the present century, a few of our Mennonite people began to think and act progressively about foreign missions. Our American Mennonite Mission in India, established in 1899, had awakened the Mennonite Church. India, however, was not the only land of need; a great continent of the Western Hemisphere was not far away, and it also was one of the great mission fields. Might it not be thought of as an "open door" for the churches of America?

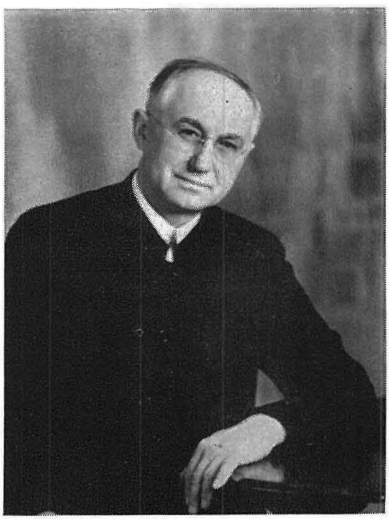
Definite study about mission fields and world needs is the best means of creating real enthusiasm and activity. Did mission study in a definite way have anything to do with the South American Mission movement in our church? A little investigation has brought forth the following facts. In 1901 a mission study class was organized at the Elkhart Institute under the leadership of Lina Zook (Ressler). South America was the field of study. Who knows but that some of the thirty or more students who sat in that class began to talk about South America in a definite way? Some years later at Goshen College a class was studying the same field. J. S. Hartzler was asked by the leader of the class to give occasional talks based on information on South America which he had secured from the State Department. These talks were greatly appreciated



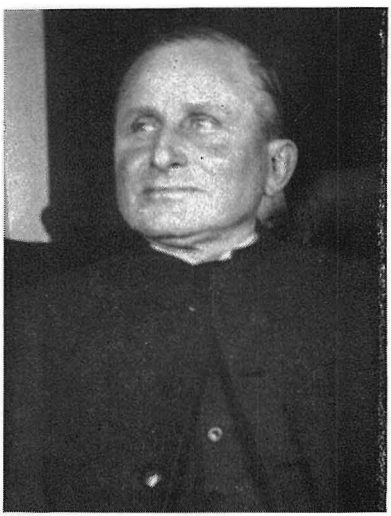
J. S. HARTZLER, the first strong promoter of the South America Mission



NOAH GRAYBILL gave the first ten dollars for a mission in South America



S. C. YODER visited the mission in South America in 1919 and 1940



SAMUEL H. MUSSELMAN visited the mission in 1919 at the same time Bro. Yoder visited the mission

and served to create considerable enthusiasm about this great mission field.

## CONTRIBUTIONS FOR SOUTH AMERICA

The enthusiasm inspired by information regarding world needs must find expression in some way. "Why can we not do something?" People ask this question after they know of urgent needs. Not just anyone can cross the frontiers and go away to other lands. But certainly someone must go and going requires money. "Let us start a South American Mission Fund." That was what somebody thought, and his thought was converted into action.

The first contribution received by the Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board was for the amount of $10 sent by Noah Graybill in April 1906. In March 1906 the Young People's Christian Association of Goshen College voted to give $100 for South America, but their contribution was not entered in the reports until May. In July of the same year the West Liberty Church, of Windom, Kansas, sent $10. The following year, 1907, brought further contributions. In March, the Spring Valley Church of North Dakota sent $15. In September, John Rupp and John Ropp of Illinois each sent $50. In November, the Maple Grove Church of Indiana sent $46.50. During the years between 1906 and 1909 the Ropp and Rupp gifts were repeated several times and likewise the Young People's Christian Association of Goshen College repeated its gift. In this way the South American Mission Fund was started. By the autumn of 1911 the fund contained over $1,000.

## THE FIRST ACTION OF THE MENNONITE BOARD OF MISSIONS AND CHARITIES

The contributors were anxious to see definite action taken by the Mission Board. They had given the money into the hands of the Board, and they felt that the responsibility lay with that body to take definite action within a reasonable time. The first hint of definite action by the Board we find in the minutes of the annual meeting in 1908. The South American Mission idea was discussed and the following recommendation

was made with reference to it: "We recommend that J. W. Shank get ready for mission work in South America as soon as he can conveniently arrange for the work, and if there be others who want to volunteer for the work, they are invited to correspond with the secretary of the mission committee. . . ." But three more years were to pass by before any further action would be taken. Some of the contributors were a bit uneasy about this delay, and each year after 1908 the annual contributions decreased.

At the annual meeting of the Board at Harrisonburg, Virginia, in May 1911, an important motion was passed. This motion provided that the writer of these lines should go to South America on a tour of investigation and bring a report of his findings to the next annual meeting of the Board. This definite plan was acted upon during the months that followed. Efforts were made to secure another person to accompany the appointee, but this was not accomplished. At a meeting of the General Conference held at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in 1911, the proposed plan of action was presented by J. S. Shoemaker, who was then secretary of the Board. At that time the appointee was first introduced to a general gathering of the Mennonite people, and there he pledged himself to perform his task to the best of his ability.

## OFF FOR SOUTH AMERICA

Passage was arranged for on the *S.S. Prinz Joichim,* due to sail for Panama on November 11, 1911. The voyage to Panama proved to be most exciting. Just four days out from New York the ship ran into the coral reefs off the Bahama Islands. We were stranded indeed. The only remedy for this misfortune was to transport to another ship all passengers, including the famous William Jennings Bryan and family, by rowboat for a distance of five miles over a rough sea. After a second transfer to a different steamer and an additional delay of some days on the Island of Jamaica, we boarded the fourth steamer at Kingston, Jamaica, whence we continued our journey to Panama almost a week behind schedule.

Since the great Panama Canal was at that time only in process of construction, passengers had to cross to the Pacific

side by train. I spent several days in the swelteringly hot city of Panama waiting for the *S.S. Urubamba* that was to call at many South American ports. Finally the last American flag at the Canal Zone was lost to view as the speeding steamer cut away across the smooth waters of the Pacific Ocean. I was off for South America on a mission for God.

We passed by Paita and other intermediate Peruvian ports where we saw the barren shores that sloped almost abruptly down from the Andes Mountains. At Callao, the seaport for Lima, which lies some miles inland, I had my first experience with the cheating boatmen and barely escaped arrest because I refused to pay ten times the regular price for the landing trip. At Lima I was cheered by the Christian entertainment of a Methodist missionary, the aged Dr. Wood, who warmed my heart by his spiritual outlook upon the cause of Christian missions in South America. His information and fatherly advice I carefully noted. At Mollendo, the second port of call after leaving Lima, we disembarked in the dangerous fashion of being carried through the air on a swinging chair. This method was necessary because there was no dock and the sea is always rough.

Here we took a train across the mountains. How I marveled at the terrible curves and the dizzy heights along that railway and how well I remember the racking headache, the *siroche* sickness, that followed! And then came the trip by steamer across Lake Titicaca, lying at an altitude of 12,644 feet, the highest navigable lake in the world. On the shores of this lake and at all railway stations of that high mountain plateau, I saw the wretched Indians in their broad, hand-woven *ponchos* (shawls) shivering with the cold. They were the poor remnants of the mighty Inca civilization which the greed of the early explorers crushed and ruined. What a story of cruelty and bitterness they could tell! The Christ whom they know not calls to the Christian Church to save these wretched millions.

At La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, the missionaries of the American Institute gave me shelter and introduced me to this quaint city lying deep in a great canyon. I remember the Indian missions, the Institute, the museum, the hilly streets

paved with cobblestones, the Indians carrying furniture and trunks on their backs, the donkeys and the llamas passing through the streets laden with wood, fruits, or vegetables, the priests with their long flowing robes, and the marketplaces with people squatting on the floor having their goods spread around them. My great impression was this: "If ever there is an excuse for foreign missions, here I see it exemplified!"

Then came the trip back to the seacoast to the port of Antofagasta. I remember the hot Christmas Day which I spent in that dreary place; but in contrast to this dreariness, the little Methodist Church where I listened to a charming Christmas program rendered in the soft-sounding Spanish language. After all, I decided, God is here. The joy, the songs, the spiritual fervor, and the bright lights, all reminded me of the Christmas in my home across the sea.

Another ride on a steamer brought me to Valparaíso, the greatest and most beautiful port on the west coast of South America. I remember the Spinnings, devoted missionaries of the Presbyterian Board, with their progressive central church and their numerous branch Sunday schools. I remember the trip to Santiago and the kind entertainment at Instituto Inglés where I first learned to know the Brownings, who later were missionaries in Argentina. I remember also the long journey south through the central valley of Chile—the vineyards, the orchards, the little fields of green and brown and drab that one could see over the rounded knolls and in the level stretches of the valley. I remember the Chilean *rotos,* the wretched farmers who lived in poverty and almost slavery to the great landlords. How I pitied them and longed to be a missionary to help supply their desperate needs!

I remember in my visit at Tumuco, the mission school and hospital of the Anglicans, and the Alliance Church where I became acquainted with Brother Zook from Pennsylvania. I recall with pleasure the visit to Quepe Farm and Indian School in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Bullock; the woods that reminded me of Michigan; the deep, dark streams and the suspension bridge made of wires built by the missionary; the parrots; the Indian villages with the grass-covered huts; and the kindness of the missionaries and the happy discussion of the problems

of missions. With similar joy I remember the visit at Concepción, Chile, where Mr. and Mrs. Arms of the Methodist Mission Girls' School gave me a hearty welcome. It was their morning family circle prayer hour that gave me an insight into the yearning for lost souls that should characterize all missionaries, and it was this visit that intensified my desire to return some day to Chile for the work of my Lord.

When I gave good-by to Chile, the train again climbed upward and across the highest parts of the Andes Mountains. Here were beautiful blue lakes, waterfalls, canyons, snow-capped peaks, and many-colored mountain walls. On the other side appeared the great Argentine city of Mendoza and the endless plains stretching far to the East. Our train left the foothills, and the next morning found us stranded without engine or engineer out on the wild plains because of a labor strike, we were told. A whole day without water and food is after all endurable.

Again we sped on, and on the third day we pulled into the great metropolis of Buenos Aires. I recall many things that I saw thirty-one years ago in that city: the windmills, too numerous to count (they are not there today), the heavy traffic that filled the narrow streets, the kind face of Mr. Shuman who gave me my bearings in my strange surroundings, the sheltering home of the Baumans where I lived for a month, and the visits with Dr. Craver and other missionaries, all of whom were ready to talk about the future Mennonite Mission in South America and to give helpful suggestions.

Then I recall the trip to the interior of Argentina, visiting the cities of Rosario and Santa Fe and the province of Entre Rios. Here I had real glimpses of Argentina's farming sections, the corn and wheat fields, and the cattle ranches. Finally, in a night trip across the mighty Rio de la Plata, 150 miles wide at its mouth, I came to Montevideo where various missionaries gave me further inspiration and knowledge about the Lord's work in that small country.

Thus were ended my journeys by sea and land, across mountains and inland lakes, up and down rivers, through great capitals, seaports, and villages, through the length and breadth of valleys, and over deserts and fertile plains. There were

Map of the two continents showing the route of the journey for 1912 made by Bro. J. W. Shank and the route which the first missionaries took in 1917

conferences with consuls and commercial attachés, with missionaries engaged in various types of work, evangelistic, hospital, agricultural or educational, and with business men, bankers, and engineers. All of these conferences helped to fill my notebooks with information regarding religious, social, and moral conditions, commercial enterprises, products, occupations, employment, living conditions, wealth, and poverty; about lands and land ownership; about types of missionary endeavor, unoccupied regions, work among the Indians and immigrants. All of this information, in classified form, served as a basis for my report to the Mission Board.

While I was in Buenos Aires, a cable reached me stating that I should return to the United States in time for the annual Mission Board meeting. By March 1, I was ready to embark for the homeland, traveling by way of England, because it was the cheapest way home. The following quotation from my travel diaries will give an impression of how the picture looked at the time:

"Now that I have left South America behind, I ask myself many things: Shall I ever see this continent again? What has the future in store for us with reference to the South American enterprise? As to the people and their attitude, I have changed my opinion somewhat. No picture of religious needs in this land has been overdrawn; no picture of moral depravity has been made too dark, but of this I am certain: South America does not want religion. She is self-sufficient. She wants pleasure and money and that desire is eating away the very heart of character. What appeals to me most in South America are the Indians, the children, the poor peon class. Their need is desperate and I believe they desire something better, though that desire they cannot define."

After twenty-three days' journey, the *S.S. Highland Rover* reached England. It was a pleasant journey in spite of about five days of very heavy sea. Four days in London were a very short time to get acquainted with the seat of that great empire. I was very anxious to make the last lap of the journey across the Atlantic to New York. The *S.S. America* passed through the icy waters of the north Atlantic just a few days before the occurrence of the great disaster of the *S.S. Titanic*

and in due time, April 6, 1912, reached her destination at New York City.

## REPORTING TO THE BOARD

At the regular Board meeting held in Illinois in May 1912, it was my task to give a report of the findings. This was a responsibility that to me seemed very great and difficult to fulfill. Information in abundance was at hand. That I could give easily. I was aware of the fact, however, that my own opinion would give definite color to the whole enterprise. The right things must be said to make clear to the people that South America needed evangelism, that there were problems, and that it was a field open to us. But how much emphasis should one give to the drawbacks: the high costs, climatic difficulties, opposition, immorality and ignorance, and the resulting slow progress one must expect? One must not give the impression that the darker colors of the picture overbalanced the brighter ones. The picture must be presented with truthfulness. What did others in South America think about a Mennonite Mission in those lands? What did I think? What would be the next step? And so questions would arise.

In my report I emphasized the following points:

1. That a mission in South America might be launched, but not without good financial backing. This suggestion was based on advice from men of experience in South America.
2. That an effort should be made to plan the mission on the basis of partial self-support. An agricultural project with intensive farming, fruit raising, and poultry raising would be a practical method of providing partial self-support.
3. Educational mission work should be a part of the program, and this could be carried on in connection with an agricultural project, provided this were near populated areas.
4. Chile seemed at the time to be the most suitable field for the type of work we had in mind because farming on the intensive scale in the central valley, fairly heavily populated, would be more feasible than in the more sparsely populated regions of other countries; because the need of mission schools was more urgent in Chile; because climatic conditions were very favorable; and because in Chile there is not so great a mixture of races.

After discussing the matter, the Board decided to inaugurate a campaign of solicitation for the South American Mission Fund among the churches of the United States and Canada. The Board asked that a minimum of $20,000 be raised in pledges before any attempt should be made to launch the work. It was my task to undertake this new enterprise of solicitation.

## OUT AMONG THE CHURCHES

The task of visiting the churches and making individual solicitation required the greater part of a year. Many people were fearful that the project would fail for lack of support among the churches. The response, however, was most remarkable. By March 1913, the contributions and pledges passed the goal of $20,000. The people by their interest proved their readiness to support a new mission in South America.

At the Board meeting of 1913 at the Oak Grove Church in Wayne County, Ohio, the contributors to this fund organized and made the following decisions:

1. "That money pledged for this work be put on interest at the rate of 6 per cent and the income used to support the work.

2. "That at least two brethren as missionaries be sent to South America as soon as the Board deem it expedient; also that said missionaries be directed to spend some time in further study and investigation of the field with the view of establishing the work in South America.

3. "That no work of magnitude be launched within two years from the date of sending the first missionaries and that before any permanent investment of said funds be made in South America the Board is to send another man to the field to co-operate with said missionaries in making aforesaid investment."

## THE SOUTH AMERICAN MISSION MOVEMENT TAKES A REST

The general opinion of the people was that after funds were raised the new mission project would soon be launched. This, however, was not the case. Years came and went without

definite steps being taken to open the work. At the annual Board meetings in 1914 and 1915 no action of any kind was taken. This delay was quite disconcerting to many of those who conributed to this cause, and some were rather vigorous in criticism of the Mission Board.

At the annual meeting of the Board in 1916, J. S. Hartzler reported as follows: "The committee has made special effort to find proper persons to begin the work there, not only considering volunteers, but have asked several persons to go. Thus far we have nothing definite to report. We still hope to be able to send four persons within the next nine months. Let us pray to that end."

This was somewhat encouraging to those who had waited long to see the work begin, but the delay of previous years caused many to fear that again nothing would be done.

## A REAL STEP FORWARD

The members of the above-mentioned committee became active during the following summer. In some unexpected way the problem was cleared up by the leading of the Spirit of God. Before the end of 1916 the needed workers were secured and plans put under way for sending them to the field. Because of circumstances with reference to the private work of the appointees, they could not conveniently be released until the close of the school year in 1917.

Accordingly, at the annual meeting of the Board in 1917, the first four missionaries for South America were formally appointed. They were T. K. Hershey and wife and J. W. Shank and wife. Thus, after eleven years, counting from the time of the first contributions for this work, the South American Mission was really on the way to its beginning. It took many years to bring to fruitage the first impulses favoring this mission. It was wartime but in spite of that passage was secured on the *S.S. Vauban* (British) scheduled to sail for Argentina about the middle of August.

## WHY TO ARGENTINA?

It should be stated here that after the tour of investigation in South America in 1911 and 1912 I believed that our future

mission would probably be located in Chile. (See No. 4 in report to the Board on page 10.) Why were we about to sail to Argentina? Why not to Chile? or to Peru? or to Bolivia?

In the first place our Board members favored the opening of a mission in a temperate climate similar to that of the United States. Thus missionary candidates who could not go to the hot climate of India could go to the more favorable climate of South America. Peru and Bolivia are in the hot regions near the Equator but their high plateaus have a temperate climate. These plateau regions are not favorable to agricultural pursuits. It did not seem advisable for representatives of the Mennonite people who have always been farmers, to open a mission on the barren plateaus of South America. Furthermore the cost of living, equipment, and travel in these two west coast countries is great. Our Board felt that our first work should be in a region more favorable than Bolivia or Peru.

Chile, on the other hand, seemed favorable in many respects. The climate is good, and the people were responsive to the Gospel. The central valley was adapted to farming, dairying, fruit growing, and trucking. In many other respects it was a fine field in which to do mission work. Why then was Chile not chosen as our field?

We must remember that the tour of investigation was completed early in 1912, but the first missionaries were not sent out until late in 1917. Over five years had elapsed, and during this time definite changes took place in the missionary setup of Chile. Letters from responsible persons in Chile brought the information that the missionary societies already at work there had made a new survey of their field, parceling out to each existing society a definite territory. That left no territory that was open to us unless we should get the consent of some society to turn over to us a part of their territory. After considering this difficulty in Chile, our Board decided to send us to the large unoccupied regions of Argentina. We have never doubted the wisdom of this decision.

## THE SAILING

On August 11 the missionary party took the train in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. We lodged at the St. Andrew Hotel in

New York while engaged in getting our papers and baggage in order. We boarded the steamer on August 15, but it was not until August 16 in the afternoon that we saw the coastline of our native land fade away in the distance. We were apparently stepping out into the great unknown. Yet we did so with the assurance that we were undertaking for God and that He would through our efforts bring many things to pass for the honor of His name in that land across the sea.

Those were long weeks of travel as we zigzagged through submarine and mine infested waters, stopping leisurely at ports and leaving them again according to no advertised schedule. After sixteen days we caught the first glimpse of the mainland off Brazil, but not until eleven days later did our ship nose into the great port of Buenos Aires where we disembarked on September 11.

## THE SOJOURN IN BUENOS AIRES

Our first few days in this great metropolis were pleasant. We were fortunate in discovering some friends who helped us to secure a temporary lodging place and later a house for permanent residence. By September 22 we were comfortably established in our new home and ten days later our task of language study began. During a period of seventeen months from the time of arrival, we continued to live in Buenos Aires. Our chief task was language study. Besides learning from books, we found personal contacts of great value in training the ear as well as the tongue. Conversations with the grocer and a troop of street venders gave us all kinds of persons with whom to practice the words learned daily. Our children who had started to school brought home new Spanish words from their daily lessons, all words of practical use to us.

Another important task during this period was the study of Argentine history and geography and actual life. In order to do this we not only studied the life in the city and the textbooks of the public schools, but we made long trips into the interior visiting missions of other denominations and looking over unoccupied cities and villages in different regions. In this way we hoped to find the region that was to be our future home and the scene of our labors for the Lord. While our good wives

kept the home fires burning and looked after the children, we traveled through the length and breadth of the land. A detailed story of these journeys cannot be given in this brief history. It is sufficient to say that we saw the tropical region of the North, land of sugar cane and oranges. We skirted along the edges of the great Andes Mountains of the West, land of vineyards and fruit orchards. We explored the great wheat regions of the South and the great central corn belt and the cattle ranches of the Middle West. We visited the large interior cities as well as smaller towns and villages. We visited large *estancias* (farms) and small truck and fruit farms. We were entertained at times in the homes of missionaries where we learned many things about problems and methods of work. We traveled on cold and dusty trains, slept on hard seats or in stuffy rooms of hotels. We passed through desert regions and mountains, over marshy lands and broad fertile plains. We once missed train connections because we did not understand the call of the conductor. Once thieves broke into our baggage because we trusted the railway authorities; on another occasion our summer clothes were bespattered with mud and rain for lack of a proper country conveyance. But in all of this we were in the school of experience, and we were learning little by little the job of being missionaries. Many of the hard facts of life are best learned by a close-up look at things. Property values, cost of building, cost of living, climatic conditions, products of different regions, customs of the people—all these things were talked about and noted.

By January 1919, after making our last tour to the interior, we were anxious to leave Buenos Aires and get settled in the region to the southwest that we had chosen for our future home. On January 16 our household goods were loaded into a freight car billed for the station Pehuajó 300 miles away. Thirteen years had passed since 1906 when Noah Graybill gave his ten dollars for the South American Mission. Finally, we were ready to open our first mission station in South America.

BOLIVIA
BRAZIL
JUJUY
LOS ANDES
SALTA
FORMOSA
PARAGUAY
CHILE
ARGENTINA
CHACO
SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO
TUCUMAN
CATAMARCA
MISIONES
CORRIENTES
SANTA FE
ENTRE RIOS
URUGUAY
RIOJA
SAN JUAN
CORDOBA
SAN LUIS
MENDOZA
Santiago
Buenos Aires
La Plata
PAMPA Government
BUENOS AIRES
Pehuajo
Mar del Plata
NEUQUEN Government
Bahia Blanca
RIO NEGRO Government
CHUBUT Government
SANTA CRUZ Government
PACIFIC OCEAN
ATLANTIC OCEAN
TIERRA DEL FUEGO
FALKLAND IS.

CHAPTER II

# A FIELD READY FOR HARVEST

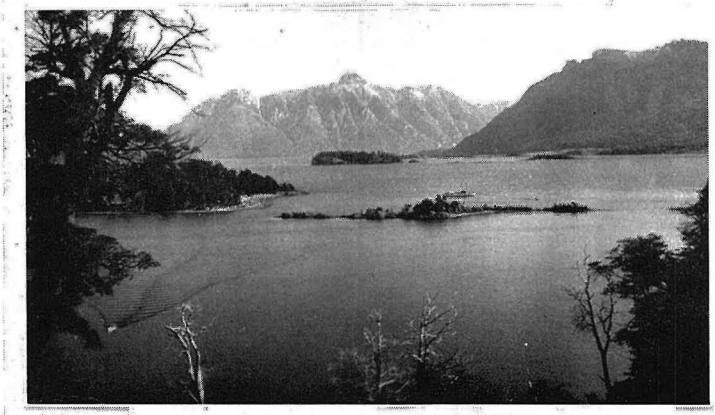
BY J. W. SHANK

If one looks at the map on page 8, he will observe that Argentina is far to the southern end of the South American continent. Notice that it is approached most easily from the east through the Atlantic Ocean. The Andes Mountain barrier distinctly separates the country of Argentina from the west coast. Argentina lies almost wholly in the South Temperate Zone from about twenty-three degrees to fifty-five degrees south, from the Torrid Zone to far toward the South Frigid Zone. If South America were folded over into the Northern Hemisphere at the Equator, the present northern boundary of Argentina would touch Cuba and its present southern point would touch Labrador. Observe that it is equivalent in size to more than one half of the United States and that its length from north to south is almost 2,500 miles while its width at the widest place is about 800 miles.

Argentina's position is unique in this that it has the most splendid variety of climate, ranging from a climate similar to Labrador in the South to that of Cuba in the extreme north. The average climate is similar to that of the most favored central regions of the United States. The traveler who crosses the central region of Argentina is charmed by the vastness of her prairie lands, but if perchance he goes north or west, he will discover forested hills and mountains, extensive desert regions, inland lakes, and immense rivers, and to the extreme south rolling grass lands.

## The Great Central Region

The real charm of Argentina is her great central region in the heart of which lies the Argentine Mennonite Mission. For a distance of 350 miles west of Buenos Aires one will find an inhabited region, rich in truck and fruit farms near Buenos Aires; great dairy and agricultural farms and cattle ranches farther west; immense groves of trees, farm buildings, and windmills



TOP: Scene from the lake region of southern Argentina
SECOND: Home of Paraguayan Christians—Independent Mission
THIRD: A skyscraper of Buenos Aires

scattered here and there, the work of enterprising farmers; hundreds of towns and villages occupied by tens of thousands of inhabitants; graded-up highways traversed either by the old-fashioned wagons or by motor trucks and automobiles of modern make. Churches, school buildings, municipal structures, fine residences, creameries, flour mills and large department stores are found in all of the more enterprising towns.

The region out toward the Andes Mountains is still mostly uncultivated. Here and there are cattle ranches in charge of men of the plains. The land is not as level as it is nearer the eastern sea-coast. Instead of tall grass, the land is covered with scrub bushes and low thorn trees such as grow in semiarid regions. The cattle that roam over the plains are not wild, for they are accustomed to the presence of modern cowboys. However, there are wild ostriches, foxes, and jack rabbits, and occasionally one may track a desert lion.

Our interest in this survey will be the section of country of the Middle West. Here are the *quintas* (truck farms), *chacras* (small farms), and *estancias* (great ranches), and the villages and towns where the great majority of the population lives.

Let us now consult the map of the Argentine Republic on page 16. Our interest is in the three central provinces, Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and La Pampa. In the enlarged map of central Argentina (see inside cover), observe the railways running west of Buenos Aires. The Western Railroad from Suipacha westward, branches out in a fanlike network west and southwest. This network of lines within this huge triangle serves as a means of communication for the lower district of our mission. Most of the lines run east and west. Only by going west as far as Catrilo, do we find a branch line of the Southern Railroad running northwest.

The distance from Buenos Aires to the central part of La Pampa is approximately 400 miles; from Buenos Aires to northern Córdoba is about 480 miles. These points represent the most western and northern limits of our field of operation. This region, as will be seen from the map, is right in the heart of the republic. All of the towns named on the map have from 3,000 to 40,000 inhabitants. A few of them have more than that. These cities are centers of important farming regions.

TOP: Argentine cattlemen at game of *tabas*
SECOND: Islanders living in the delta region of the River Plata
THIRD: A market scene in a town of northern Argentina

## The Original Inhabitants

The original inhabitants of this great region occupied by our mission were the Indians. In the days of conquest and colonization by the white man, they were often imposed upon and thereby learned to be tricky and deceitful. They never lacked ingenuity to put up a long and bitter fight against the invader. But during the last two centuries, they gave way to the immigrant, either by mingling with this new race and becoming a part of it, or by moving farther west or north to the mountains. Their contact with the priests of Catholicism gave them many religious superstitions and half-Christian practices, but never have we found any of the remnants of this race, still living in the region, who possess a clear and sincere religious faith.

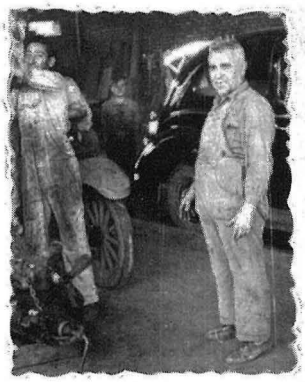
## European Colonists

The Spanish and Italian colonists who invaded the region often intermarried with the Indians. Thus there was formed a mixed race that even today is not to be despised for its insignificance in numbers. But the ruling class in central Argentina is the white man, the descendant of southern Europeans who migrated to Argentina in numbers that run into the millions. The immigrant elements have entered every section of the land. Aside from the prevailing Spanish, Italian, German, English, and French elements, there are Russian, Austrian, Belgian, Polish, Hollandish, Danish, Swedish, Arabian, Indian (east India), Chinese, and Japanese.

These foreign elements often retain their national characteristics by perpetuating them in societies of their own nationality. In every town of considerable size the Italians, Spanish, and French celebrate their own national holidays in an ostentatious manner. Each one of these groups maintains its own hospital in Buenos Aires. But from year to year there are fewer immigrants from foreign countries. Consequently the amalgamation of the different elements already in the country can more easily continue.

## The Argentine Gaucho

The Argentine Gaucho must be mentioned in a separate section. He may be called a lost and wandering child of the social



OCCUPATIONS

TOP: Changador (drayman); bread man
SECOND: Green hay at your door; mechanic
THIRD: Putting up a windmill and tank
FOURTH: Trucking, stuck in a road pond

group or a sort of nomad of the desert, reared on horseback and learning from childhood to fight and suffer. The Gaucho is a mestizo, that is, of Spanish and Indian mixture. He has a pride inherited both from the Indian and the Spaniards. He has always desired liberty without limit, not being fitted to do the work of negro slaves, in fact always avoiding servile tasks. He has always preferred the frontier where he might live his Arablike life with his horse and cattle. He has two negative characteristics, his laziness and his pessimism. He is strong but his will to work ceases when he has enough to satisfy the barest necessities of life. His resignation to the inferior conditions of life in which he was born is, in fact, a resignation to fate. The Gaucho gradually displaced the Indian, the latter being driven back and scattered in the desert where he has all but disappeared. The Gaucho, in turn, has given way to the European immigrant, retiring to the old-style farms and out-of-way places. He may be seen today living in his mud hut out on the edge of the settled sections, but he has lost much of his former vigor. Nevertheless many sons of the old-time Gauchos have been educated and have become mixed with the immigrant type.

## More Recent History

The last sixty-five years have been years of interior development and general political unification in Argentina. The frontier lines have been pushed farther and farther from the cities, and the Indians have been receding to the mountains of the West and to the wild regions of the South. The last great drive against them was made in 1879 by General Roca. Increasing numbers of immigrants began to come in, 3,371,000 having arrived between the years 1857 and 1930. Railways were built enabling the newcomers to find homes in the rich farming lands of the interior, thus developing for the first time some of the agricultural resources of the country.

## The Character of the People

Their character is still South American. While it is true that the variety of character type is very great, yet the foreigner sees certain prevailing characteristics. Argentine courtesy is most charming. Even a workman will offer his hand to a well-

dressed person, unless his hand is dirty, whereupon he will offer his excuse. Children from the poorest homes are strictly taught the requirements of courtesy. There is a spirit of generosity and kindliness. Homes will be opened for helpless children, even though there is hardly enough for those already in the family. People are intelligent and are artistically inclined; both of these characteristics make possible a high degree of culture and achievement. The power of expression is most remarkable. Nearly all children, from an early age, can recite well in public. They have a natural grace and manner that is quite superior to the ordinary Anglo-Saxon.

One finds much of the idealistic in their character. They are often given to sentiment, being easily ruled by strong emotions. So strong is this characteristic that it is extremely difficult for them to accept defeat with the proper sportsmanship. Love of children and the quiet homelife is characteristic. Divorce is rare indeed, though bigamy and the double standard for men are often practiced.

Most of the writers of twenty years ago refer to the disdain for labor, the indolence and contempt for business, and the reserve and personal pride of the people, which these writers intimated are the characteristics of the entire population. However, after residing twenty-five years in the heart of the republic, we are convinced that this is not a true characterization. We cannot but admire the keen business activity of the ordinary inhabitant of both town and country. Among these are the dairymen, truck gardeners, and small farmers of the country districts; the carpenters and the manufacturers of brick, mosaics, macaroni, *alpargatas* (cloth shoes), wicker furniture, and so on, in the towns. These folks are our neighbors, and we cannot but observe their willingness to do hard work in their struggle for independence. Even the Spanish immigrant, renowned in the past for his disdain of toil, is today active, though often not quite so successful as the Italian.

We can find everywhere, however, the nonprogressive type. They are men who are content to get job work now and again, but prefer to have considerable time to visit their cronies, drinking their mate tea, and exchanging tales of their exploits among men.

Another characteristic that is disconcerting to the missionary is the lack of complete frankness, or the tendency to conceal their real feelings or sentiments if you have by chance given offense. One may try very hard to find out the facts about the cause of offense, but it is almost impossible to accomplish it. In fact the Argentine people dislike the openness of the foreigner. They think people who are too ready to tell others real facts about themselves are very foolish. Honesty, to them, is to be practiced when it is convenient. Even when lying, they are inclined to affirm with the greatest insistence that they are telling the truth.

But after all that one may say regarding this negative characteristic, we must affirm that the people are lovable and make good and constant friends. We are grateful to count among our most intimate friends in this world a long list of people who are natives of Argentina. Especially do we say this of those who have been won for Christ.

## The Religious Character of the People

While it is true that in colonial times, religion occupied a very large place in the life of the people, yet great changes have taken place with the advance of time. The founders of the new nation, after the break with Spain, were men of liberal views and would have been ready to break with Rome as well. They really developed a degree of toleration toward other religions. James Thomson, a British Protestant, was able in 1818 to begin the establishment of evangelical schools using the Bible as a textbook for reading. Because the civil authorities received him favorably, he was able to open 100 schools with 5,000 children in attendance.

But by 1823 religious "orders" from Spain began to pour into the South American colonies. These proved to be an important factor in preventing the rise of national churches. Thomson's schools were outlawed by the ecclesiastical authorities; Bibles were burned and parents were compelled to take their children from these schools. Thus the old Catholic system continued in the Argentine Republic.

But religious coldness was fast taking the place of fanatical zeal. The *criollos* of the interior were neglected religiously.

Only foolish superstitions kept them in a sort of blind allegiance to the church. The immigrants who came after the government of the republic was more or less stabilized were of Catholic origin from southern Europe. Most of these went to the interior where the church exercised the lowest grade of religious oversight. These also became indifferent to the church and soon sank into a condition similar to that in which they found the *criollos*. At the same time the intellectual classes in the large cities were influenced by the wave of agnosticism and atheism that was making inroads upon the religious life of Europe. Meanwhile other religious ideas were coming in with the immigrants: Spiritualists, with their claims of getting glimpses of the hereafter; Theosophists claiming a superior philosophy that appealed to the intellectual; the "Mary Mother" religionists, who preached healing and a sort of social-ethical philosophy. Then there were many Lutherans, Jews, Waldensians, Greek Catholics, and various other Protestant sects.

The resulting religious characteristics of the people that hold forth today may be listed as follows: spiritual inertia or a passive attitude toward moral and religious questions; extreme religious coldness which may be found among all classes; extreme ignorance of the meaning and content of the Christian religion; Mariolatry among the more fanatical Catholics; vulgar superstition among the more ignorant classes; and lastly, blind devotion on the part of the minority to the Catholic leaders of today.

## THE CHURCH OF ROME IN ARGENTINA

Only a brief summary of conditions in the Roman Catholic Church in Argentina can be given here, though an entire volume would be required to give a proper picture.

In colonial times the church exercised an authority quite as complete as she exercised in Europe during the Middle Ages. It was a religious hierarchy in operation. Cathedrals, chapels, monasteries, nunneries, asylums, hospitals, and orphanages covered the land. Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits, each came in turn to swarm into the interior where they might get the people under their control. But what is the story of the centuries of that control? Let us summarize.

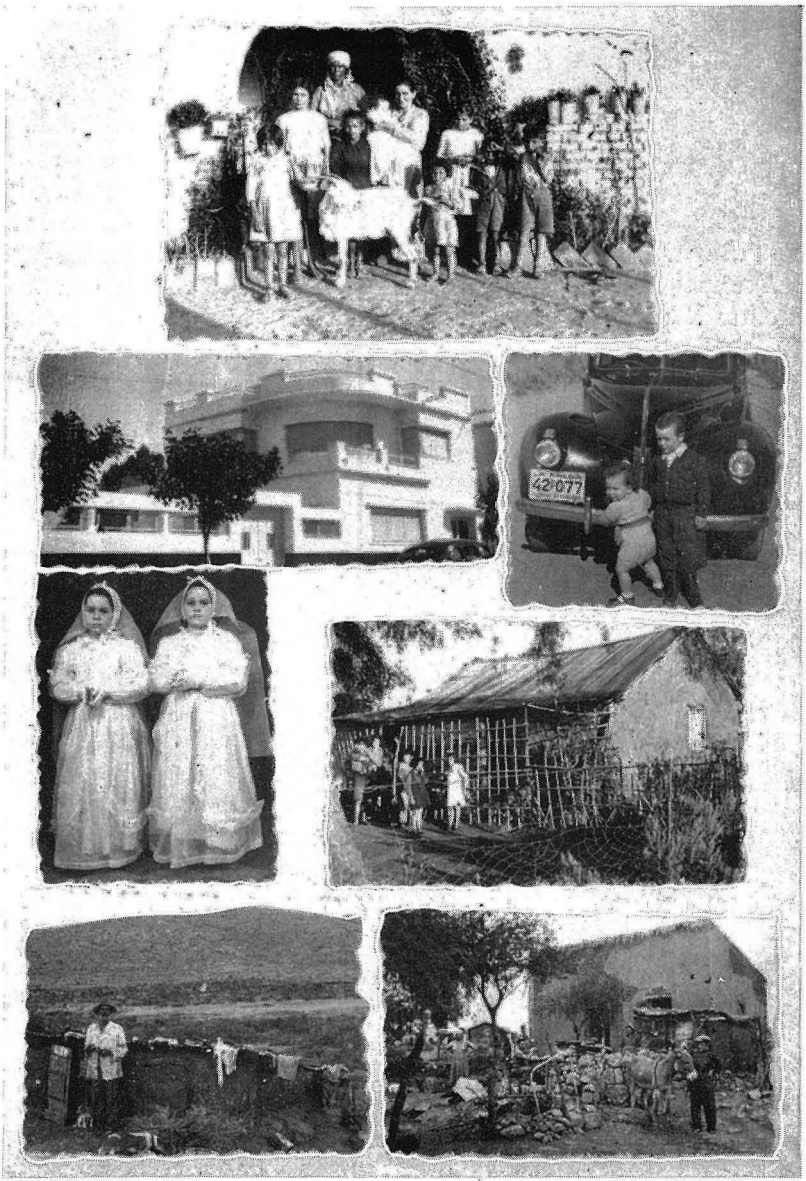
The Indian, debauched by church festivals and fanaticized

by church superstitions, yet remained unconverted at heart and thus became more a child of evil than before. The Catholic Church by her methods of inquisition, was able to control by fear the faltering multitudes and thus build up a blind faith that was void of inspiration and love. Her attitude toward any other faith than her own was always one of absolute intolerance, and this was restrained only by men of finer moral and intellectual caliber who happened to exercise power in the civil governments. The Catholic Church has trodden down the laity, taking freedom and responsibility from them, and making devotion consist in absolute submission; but, since her great power has vanished, her moral influence has vanished with it. Her original educational policy that made purity of blood (Spanish blood) a prerequisite for entrance to the university, prepared to make the masses submissive to monarchical control in the state church. Her later educational policy that maintains powerful church schools, open to students of the moneyed class and that sponsors the preparation of textbooks for the common schools, aims at the continued control of the Argentine mind.

The attempt of the Catholic Church to maintain her position as the state church has not been successful, inasmuch as the government looks upon her as a mere social influence and does not allow interference with state matters. Finally, in spite of the claims of Catholicism to be the only legitimate religion in South America, she has failed to win the masses of the people to a whole-hearted faith; failed to lift up her people morally, socially, and spiritually; failed to win the intellectuals, especially the men, to a belief in Christianity; failed to create a spirit of stewardship in those who give to charity; failed to preserve in her own clergy a spirit of self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of Christ; and has failed most sadly to carry out her missionary task to all of South America.

## Moral Conditions in Argentina

Irreligion and religious indifference are always accompanied by some forms of immorality. The common sins of every nation are found in Argentine life. It would be too bold to say that they are more prevalent in Argentina than elsewhere. Here are a few statistics that speak for themselves. In Buenos Aires




TOP: How to "get your goat" (See page 204)
SECOND: Modern house; Holderman children at play
THIRD: First communion (Romish); Ranchito, native house
FOURTH: "Home Sweet Home" in the Córdoba Hills.

13.22 per cent of the births are illegitimate; 70 per cent of the men, it is claimed, are affected with sexual diseases; the National Lottery of Argentina has an annual profit of twenty million pesos which, it is said, is used for charitable purposes; a similar sum is earned by the Jockey Club which sponsors the national horse races.

Although statistics with reference to alcoholism, nicotinism, thieving, murder, and so on are not available, it is well known that they, too, are national sins in spite of the fact that the papers do not report them as fully as in most other countries.

## The Language of Argentina

The official language of Argentina is Spanish. No foreign business man nor missionary can expect to accomplish anything until he has mastered this language. While it is true that there are slight dialectic variations in distinct provinces of Argentina, yet if one learns the standard Spanish, he can work with ease in any part of the republic. The large number of foreign immigrants have helped to change the language to some extent. A few common English words that have come into use are the following: football (pronounced, "fú bal"), cowboy (pronounced, "co-boi"), automobile (pronounced, "automovil"), roast beef (pronounced, "rós-bif"), Quaker Oats (pronounced, "Cuäker"). Likewise from the Italian, French, and German there are many borrowed words.

Most foreigners pronounce the Spanish badly. The worst offenders are the Italians, who seem to make little effort to speak with the correct accent. English-speaking people offend mostly in pronouncing letters like "d" or "b" too hard, the vowels with the English variations instead of the simple Spanish sounds, and the Spanish double "rr" without the proper trill. The Argentine people try to exercise patience with the bad Spanish they hear spoken by foreigners.

It is the task of every missionary, upon arrival, to set about studying this language. He must count on a year or more to acquire proficiency. Some have acquired a fair speaking knowledge in a year; others require much more time. It is a serious task, and if the missionary looks upon it as such, he will make good progress.

## MISSIONARY OCCUPATION OF THE FIELD

One of the concerns of first importance to a missionary society when entering a new field is to discover the unoccupied regions. While there are some forty religious bodies at work in Argentina, perhaps not more than eight or ten of these are engaged in general evangelization work. These few have their work scattered throughout the republic.

Missionaries representing the Methodists began work in 1843, but not until 1867 was there an actual beginning of Spanish preaching by Juan F. Thomson. The Baptists began privately through Pablo Besson in 1881, but their formal work was started in 1905 under the direction of S. M. Sowell. The Plymouth Brethren began their work more than forty years ago and are today the largest evangelical body in the field. The Disciples began, in 1906, a work that has been confined almost entirely to Buenos Aires. The Christian Missionary Alliance, the Progressive Brethren, and the Evangelical Union each began their work early in the present century.

All of these societies had from fifteen to forty years of experience in the work when our mission was opened. Yet with these and others in the work, the field is not adequately occupied. There are a few territorial divisions, whose population passes a quarter of a million people, in which no Protestant missionaries are at work. In six provinces with a total population of one and one-half million there are only twenty evangelical workers. In eight territories there are 120 towns of 6,000 or more inhabitants each, and for all these people there are not more than some fifty workers. Even in the most populated provinces the number of workers is entirely inadequate. In the central section where our own mission is located there are yet a large number of good-sized towns where no mission work has been done.

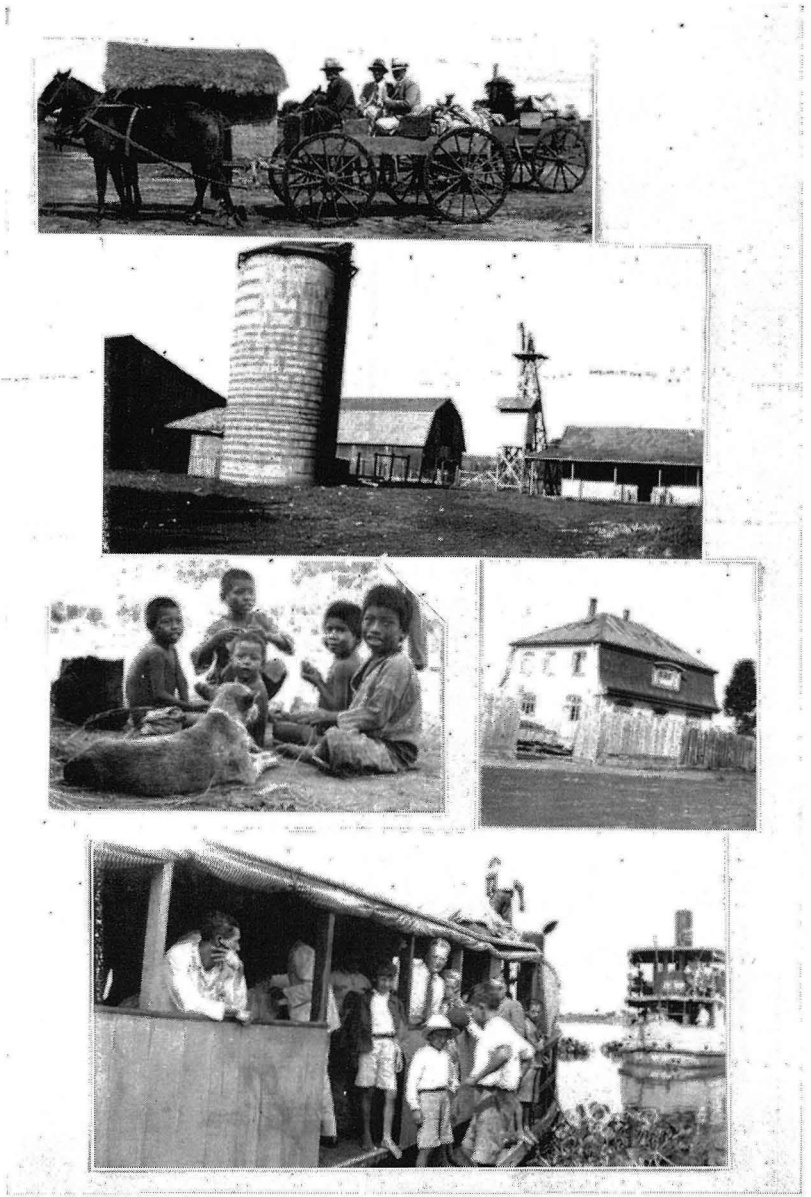
Some missionary societies work only in distinct areas which they look upon as their field, while others have little regard for division of territory. When we were traveling to different parts of Argentina looking for the most needy and appropriate field for our work, we found the central region southwest of Buenos Aires entirely unoccupied. In all respects this region provided for us the most ample room for activity and expansion.

## Town and Country Life of Today

Since in our mission we have been engaged in work among the people of the small towns and villages, we can write more definitely about them and about those of the farmer type. Many of the farms are exceedingly large, covering, in some cases, twenty to fifty square miles of territory. Many of these large farms are owned by wealthy government officers or military officials. Others are owned by men of foreign birth. One of the largest farms in the center of our mission district is owned by the Drysdale millionaires. They are Englishmen. Farming land cannot be bought easily in small tracts. Most of the people who live on small farms are renters. They usually rent for a period of years. They must provide their own buildings, and when they move away, these buildings are often torn down and the building materials hauled away. The *estancias* (large farms) are usually provided with buildings of a permanent type. One will find a mansion where the *major domo* lives. There will be room for many guests, the family and friends of the owner, when they come from the city for a few weeks or months. Besides this, one will find garages, cattle barns, granaries, machine shops, workmen's quarters, and other buildings. The management of an *estancia* is a big business. Most *estancias* go into the cattle business quite heavily. They often employ hundreds of men who work as cowboys, mechanics, farmers, cooks, bookkeepers, and bosses of other workmen.

In the cities one will find much business that depends upon farm life. There are grain and cattle buyers, stock auctioneers, flour mills, grain elevators, and storage barns. The larger commercial houses buy and sell grain, hides, farm implements, and supplies of all kinds. These stock men handle a great deal of money. For that reason every good-sized town has a number of banks that do a good business.

Since there are seldom any country schools in Argentina, the farmers must send their children to town to be educated. Some children go to boarding schools or they live with friends and attend the public schools. Only in the larger towns are there any high schools, normal schools, or trade schools, all of which are under the control of the national government. In some of the more progressive towns there are private commercial



TOP: Leaving Kilometer 145 en route to Mennonite Colony, Paraguay
SECOND: Silo and barns at Mission Farm, Angol, Chile
THIRD: Indian boys of heathen parents, Paraguayan Chaco; home in southern Chile
FOURTH: Means of travel on Paraguay River

schools that depend upon the children of the wealthy families for their students.

In the small country towns there are many poor people who live from day to day as best they can with a very meager supply of food and clothing. The men are common laborers on the farms or at road building or other unskilled labor. Their wages are low, and often they are without work for months at a time. The children of these poor people are sometimes deprived of schooling in order that they might work out and earn a pittance to help the family along. Often the mothers go out to do washing or cleaning in private homes. The life of such people is indeed a drudgery.

In all of the interior towns there are also people of considerable wealth. Many of these have large land holdings. Some are engaged in commercial enterprises; others earn good salaries in the professions. These have comfortable homes, many of which are entirely modern.

In the foregoing paragraphs we have tried to picture the background of our Argentine Mission field, the land, its people, their character, and the conditions surrounding them. These pen pictures, however, give only a surface view of the real Argentina. Even the missionaries, who have lived for many years in the midst of the conditions described, do not feel that they wholly understand the components of Argentine life. We believe, however, that this superficial view will help the North American readers to enter more sympathetically into the task of sponsoring the work of the mission through prayer and giving.

# GREAT LAND, ARGENTINA

By J. W. Shank

Far to the Southward
  Lies a land of open door;
Long is the journey
  To that distant shore;
But within its borders,
  There are souls in darkness drear
Knowing not our Saviour,
  Nor His love and cheer.

Chorus:
  Great land, Argentina,
    We have heard our Master's call
  Fear not, O despair not,
    Jesus died for all.

Great Argentina,
  Land of streams and rolling plain,
Land loved by sunshine,
  Land of wondrous fame;
'Tis so long you've waited,
  For the Gospel we can bring;
Are your children dying,
  Knowing not their King?

Far over yonder,
  In that land of golden bloom,
Millions are dying,
  Lost in sin and gloom;
Christians, we must save them,
  Let us onward, let us pray;
'Tis our Lord who calls us,
  "Go ye forth today."

Note: These words were written by the author while on his way to Argentina after his first furlough in 1924. The words may be sung to the tune, "Juniata."

CHAPTER III

# THE GREAT TASK BEGUN

## BY T. K. HERSHEY

### PEHUAJÓ (1919)

*Preliminary Beginnings*

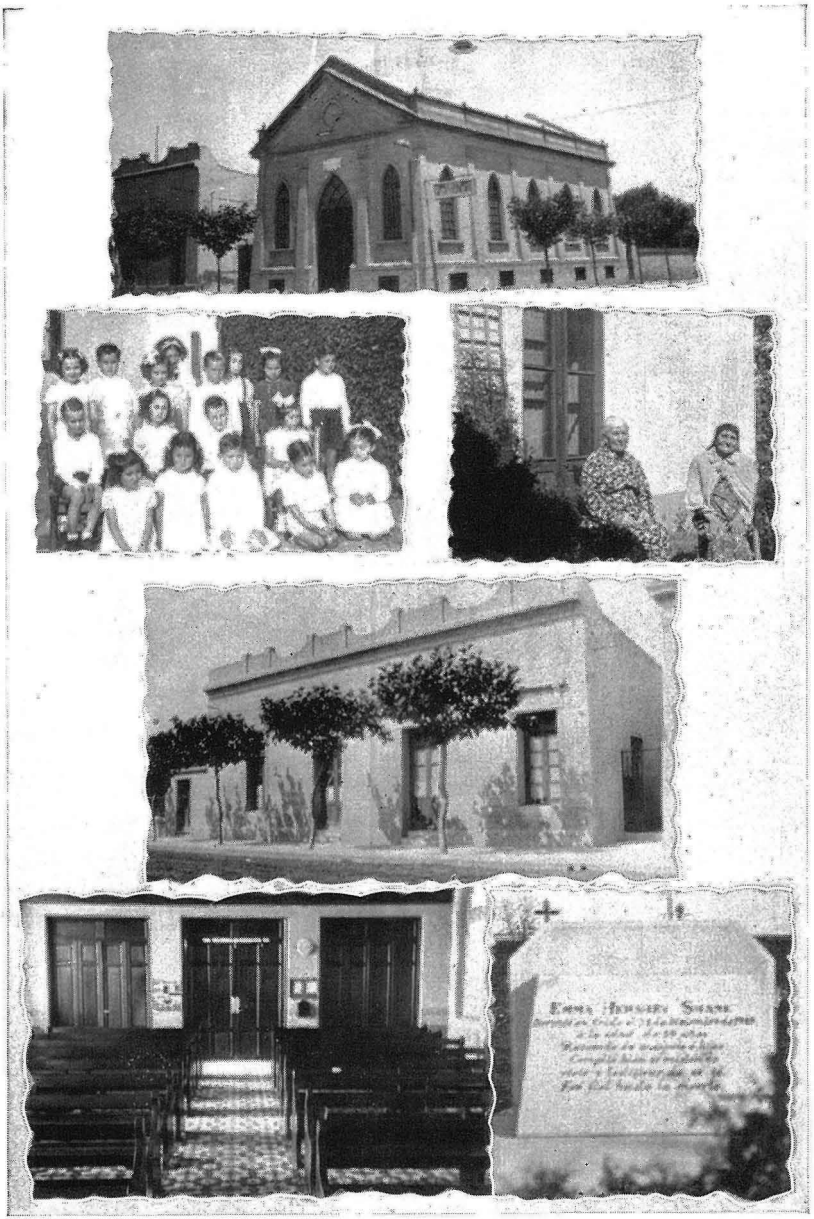
Sunday, January 26, 1919, we spent our first Lord's Day in Pehuajó, our future home, then a town of 10,000 inhabitants. In the forenoon we had services by ourselves. In the afternoon the landlord with his wife and three daughters made up our first audience. The first hymn sung in Spanish was, *Nearer My God to Thee.*

At four o'clock on February 23, 1919, we had a "sort" of Sunday-school service in our own home. A few whom we had learned to know were invited and to our agreeable surprise, eighteen were present. Not being able as yet to pray in Spanish, we conducted our first meeting without prayer! At the conclusion of these services, Sunday school was announced for every Sunday morning at ten o'clock. Thus the work began.

On March 6, 1919, we rented our first hall at forty pesos a month. We made the pulpit, which is still in use in another town, and a carpenter made the benches. The immediate launching of general mission work was detained because it had become necessary for Brother Shank to take his family to a higher altitude for the sake of his son Robert, who was suffering with asthma. While there in Rio Cuarto, province of Córdoba, Sister Shank took sick with typhoid fever.

A telegram was received on March 23 from Brother Shank, stating that Sister Shank was seriously ill and that they needed help. Since it was almost impossible to secure a dependable nurse, it was decided that I should go to help care for her.

When it was believed that Sister Shank was out of danger, I returned on April 24, bringing a young Spanish worker, Juan Barrio. He was a helper in the Brethren Mission in Rio Cuarto. He was asked to come to help us start our work in Pehuajó in a public way.



PEHUAJO

TOP: Pehuajó Church
SECOND: Kindergarten children; two patients of the clinic
THIRD: The clinic and school
FOURTH: Interior of Pehuajó Church; Emma Hershey Shank's grave

*First Public Services*

April 27, 1919, marks the date of the first series of meetings held by the Mennonites in Argentina. Mr. Barrio spoke the first evening on "Who We Are and What We Believe." The second evening his subject was "Liberty in Christ," and thus he continued until he had preached nineteen sermons. Thousands of tracts were distributed and a Sunday school was organized. One of the visible results of these first evangelistic efforts was the conversion of seven souls, five of one family.

Mr. Barrio returned on June 1 to Rio Cuarto, leaving the teaching of the seven converts and the conducting of a Sunday school and preaching services twice a week in my charge. Since we were not yet accustomed to preaching in Spanish, the first sermons were all written out in full and corrected by a young man studying English. The public services continued in this way until July 3 when the Shanks returned from Rio Cuarto. The work was then divided and pushed forward as fast as funds and helpers permitted.

Under the leadership of Sisters Shank and Hershey, a kindergarten was opened on August 4 with an enrollment of seventy. Aurelia Zapico, one of the first converts, was enlisted as assistant helper.

*First Baptismal Services*

October 10, 1919, was a day long to be remembered, being the date of our first baptismal services. Those baptized were Carlos, Angela, Anita, and María Cavadore, Aurelia Zapico, and Mrs. Asunción Altés, the wife of the judge of the town. Including the missionaries, thirty-three were present to witness this altogether-new service. The four missionaries—the Shanks and the Hersheys—with these seven recently baptized formed the first Mennonite Church in Argentina.

*Arrival of Brethren Yoder and Musselman*

S. C. Yoder and S. H. Musselman, representatives of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, arrived in Buenos Aires, December 15, 1919, on the *S.S. Vauban*. The missionaries had been looking forward with much pleasure to this date. This pleasure was marred to some extent, however, when we were informed at the dock that because of his age Brother Mus-

selman would not be permitted to go ashore. The Argentine Immigration Law prohibited one over sixty years old to enter the country unless accompanied by a younger relative who would be responsible for seeing that he would not become a vagabond in the country.

Brother Musselman was sixty-two years old and had no immediate relative with him. After a day and a night on the ship in dock, he was allowed to disembark on condition that a document be signed by the missionaries, making themselves responsible for him during his stay in the country. This was gladly done and at the same time the officials were assured that Brother Musselman would not become a "public nuisance." An order was issued to the captain of the ship to release the "prisoner." It was then with overwhelming joy on the part of all that our dear brother stepped off the ship onto Argentine soil. After visiting many places of interest and importance in Buenos Aires, the brethren arrived at four o'clock, December 20, in Pehuajó.

### *Official Name*

One of the first things done in a conjoint meeting of the missionaries and the official representatives of the Mission Board was the naming of our mission. It was therefore moved by Brother Musselman and seconded by Brother Yoder that the official name should be "The Argentine Mennonite Mission," with headquarters at Pehuajó.

### *First Communion*

Among other things done while Brethren Yoder and Musselman were here was the holding of a communion service on February 15, 1919. S. C. Yoder preached the sermon and I was asked to interpret it in Spanish. It is with fond remembrance that those first members refer to this first communion service held in Pehuajó twenty-three years ago.

### *Musselman and Yoder Return*

After attending to much official business including the purchasing of property and buildings, S. C. Yoder and S. H. Musselman left Buenos Aires on February 17, 1920, and returned to the United States via the west coast.

*Missionaries in Charge*

During the years from 1919 to 1942, many things of interest could be told by the different missionaries who spent some time as pastors of the Pehuajó congregation. Space will not permit this. The following is the list of those who were responsible for the extension of the work in our first town:

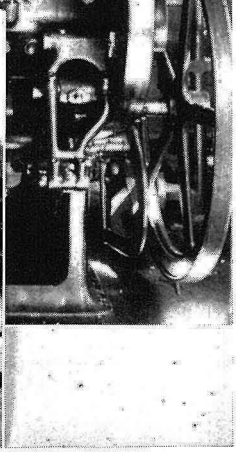
| | |
|---|---|
| The Hersheys | January 1919 to March 1924 |
| The Lantzes | March 1924 to March 1926 |
| The Hersheys | March 1926 to October 1928 |
| The Litwillers | October 1928 to March 1933 |
| The Webers | March 1933 to 1935 |
| The Shanks | 1935 to December 1936 |
| The Swartzentrubers | 1936 to May 1939 |
| The Shanks | May 1939 to January 1940 |
| The Brennemans | Jan. 1940 to Jan. 1941 |
| The Swartzentrubers | January 1941 to ——— |

It should be stated here that due to furloughs and due to the transfer to other cities of the Orphanage, the Printery, and the Bible School, all of which had their beginnings in Pehuajó, changes in leadership in Pehuajó became necessary. The present membership of Pehuajó, January 1942, is fifty.

TRENQUE LAUQUEN (1920)

After the work was well established in Pehuajó, it was thought advisable to extend the work to other towns. Accordingly, August 26, 1920, Brother Shank and I made a trip southwest to Santa Rosa. On returning, we stopped in Trenque Lauquen with the idea that this town would be a possible opening for mission work someday. The opinion prevailed that work should be opened first in Santa Rosa, near the terminal of the Western Railroad. Not being able to find a suitable house in Santa Rosa, and being impressed that Trenque Lauquen was large enough to open a work, we began looking around for suitable quarters for one family and a hall.

The next day, August 27, we found a convenient house and made arrangements to rent it. The town was only fifty miles from Pehuajó and there were two daily trains to and from Buenos Aires passing through Pehuajó. The population at that



TOP: The Mission Printery at Trenque Lauquen and the workmen
SECOND: Present church building and Sunday school at Trenque Lauquen
THIRD: Trenque Lauquen Sunday school in 1921

time was about 9,000; at present it is something like 20,000. It was decided that the Shank family should occupy this second station of the Argentine Mennonite Mission.

### *Moving to Trenque Lauquen*

In spite of their children having the mumps at the time, the Shank family managed to get their things packed and shipped to Trenque Lauquen. On September 6, Brother Shank went to Trenque Lauquen to unload the car and have the furniture hauled and placed in the new home. We with Sister Shank and their two children arrived the next day by Ford. That was the first family gathering in the second mission station.

It was decided to begin services immediately. Just as plans were laid, Robert Shank took sick with typhoid fever on September 18. Services were postponed with the exception of a small Sunday school in English for some children of railwaymen and another of similar nature in Spanish; both were held in the Shank home.

### *First Public Services*

On November 17 we were able to rent a suitable hall for the sum of forty-five pesos (fifteen dollars) a month. Benches were ordered and plans were laid so that by November 27 the first public services in Spanish were held. The attendance at the first public Sunday school was fourteen and that of the first preaching service in the evening was thirty-five inside and a large number at the door listening. The attention was very good.

### *First Series of Meetings*

During the following week, a series of meetings began. Albano Luayza, who was not yet a member of our mission, was secured for these special services; they began December 2 and continued for one week. The attendance was very good, but the result showed that Trenque Lauquen would be a difficult town to work. On December 12, Brother Shank writes in his diary: "There was a good attendance tonight. On the outside, some wicked young men acted shamefully, turning a flashlight on the people inside and talking loudly." From the beginning a number of interested families were contacted. These came regu-

larly to the services and became the first members of the congregation in Trenque Lauquen. As they saw the need of workers and believed that a native Bible reader would be a great help in creating confidence and contacting new homes, the missionaries together with the newly formed congregation in Pehuajó prayed that one of their number would be willing to accept the call as a Bible reader in Trenque Lauquen. God answered those intense and earnest prayers by laying His hands on Sister Anita Cavadore who went to Trenque Lauquen, February 14, 1921. For nine years, she visited regularly many homes, reading and explaining God's Word and inviting people to services. She has been continuing this work for twenty-one years. At present she is in charge of the work in the town of 30 de Agosto.

### *First Baptism*

The first baptismal services were held on May 19, 1921, in this second mission station. The following four were baptized: Diego Pacheco and wife, Martín Valerdi and daughter Ambrosia. In the evening of this same day, a second series of meetings began and continued until May 26. Thirteen persons openly confessed Christ. The four members remained firm and became the pillars of the second organized Mennonite Church in Argentina. By the end of the second year some twenty individuals had been received as members of the Church.

### *Necessary Changes*

The work in 1923 took on an appearance of permanency. By now there were two Sunday schools with attendance in both as high as 115. The response to the Bible reader was good; many homes were open to listen to the Word read. In this year a property was purchased, which provided a residence for the missionary family and a hall for church services. (For further data on church building, see Chapter IV, page 98).

Before moving into the new home, the Shanks went on furlough and the work was left in charge of the Lantzes. On their return in June 1924, the work was continued by the Shanks, and the Lantzes were transferred to Pehuajó until the return of the Hersheys from their furlough.

In 1927, due to sickness, the Shank family spent some months in San Luis, a province northwest of Trenque Lauquen. Brother Litwiller was in charge from July 1927 to October 1928. Being appointed head of the forthcoming Bible School, Brother Litwiller was transferred to Pehuajó, where at that time it was more suitable for this new work.

Those who have been in charge of the Trenque Lauquen Mission at different periods are the Shanks, Lantzes, Litwillers, Battaglias, and Hersheys. During the time the Orphanage was in Trenque Lauquen, Vera Hallman, Selena N. Gamber, and the Snyders were indispensable helpers in the work.

Under their respective headings, it will be seen that the Orphanage and the Mission Printery played their part in developing mission work in Trenque Lauquen. The kindergarten also became a permanent work in this town.

### *A Sad Experience*

Because of my many duties outside of the pastorate, it was decided that I should have a helper. In 1932, Santiago Battaglia was appointed for this work. He finished our Bible School course and had been taking care of a branch work in Pehuajó. We were looking forward expectantly that he should be a future pastor.

Since the time set for our furlough was fast approaching, Santiago was put in charge of the Trenque Lauquen congregation in 1933. He took the reins in hand and made some radical statements and changes, but we looked on with charity, knowing that he was young and ambitious. In October 1934, we went home on furlough and did not return until 1937. Santiago continued with the congregation and Brother Shank was appointed to look after the Printery, a task which was done by weekly visits.

During this time, Santiago had gone into business with his brother as partner to try partially to support himself. Because of this business he greatly neglected his pastoral work, and the Sunday school had dwindled down to almost nothing. He was asked by the Executive Council to give up his business to his brother and give his time to the Church. He begged to have permission for one year and then he would arrange to give up

his business. At the end of the year the promised arrangement was not in sight.

The Executive Council tried to treat him fairly by giving him ample opportunity to close out his business. Because of this I was not appointed by the missionaries and the conference to take charge of Trenque Lauquen congregation until January 1940. This appointment was thought necessary as I was in charge of the Printery which was in Trenque Lauquen. Santiago was offered an opportunity to take charge in another town.

However, it was not yet generally known that Santiago had, like Absalom, stolen the hearts of many members. The result was that in a meeting February 2, 1940, when Santiago was to turn over the church work to me, a very sad thing happened. Brother Shank was leading the meeting, and Brother Snyder, too, was present. After some explanation as to cause for the change, the discussion drifted to other subjects and became quite active. Santiago explained that he had resigned at the Annual Conference and stated that he would simply be a lay-member. Four or five of his closest friends who had been posted on what to say and what questions to ask, became excited and at a given signal by an older member, the whole congregation walked out declaring that they were for "Santiago and Christ." A few lingered to let us know that they were not in favor of such actions.

Later we learned that he had been working up the dissension spirit since the beginning of his pastorate. He had prepared his friends for this final blow and had stirred up the nationalistic spirit against foreigners, and when they walked out, they took many members with them. Our mission put forth efforts for a reconciliation, but to no avail. The dissenting group started up an independent congregation just a block away. This congregation continued for two years during which time they worked against us by insinuations and untruth, and at the same time tried to get in with some other denominations. Finally the Baptists came to their aid. After four visits and without making any exactions as to the *why* of the errors or their correction, they immersed Santiago, his wife, and twenty-three others. All of these except one were former members of our congregation.

*Reviving the Work*

With those who did not consent to the division, the Trenque Lauquen congregation was reorganized. A few members moved in from other congregations and with the very excellent help of Pablo Cavadore and his sister Anita, there was an addition of nineteen new members in 1941. Again a Mennonite Church is functioning in Trenque Lauquen. At present there are three Sunday schools, three weekly preaching services, a women's meeting, Young People's Meeting, and a literary society. The present membership of the Trenque Lauquen Church, January 1942, is fifty-four.

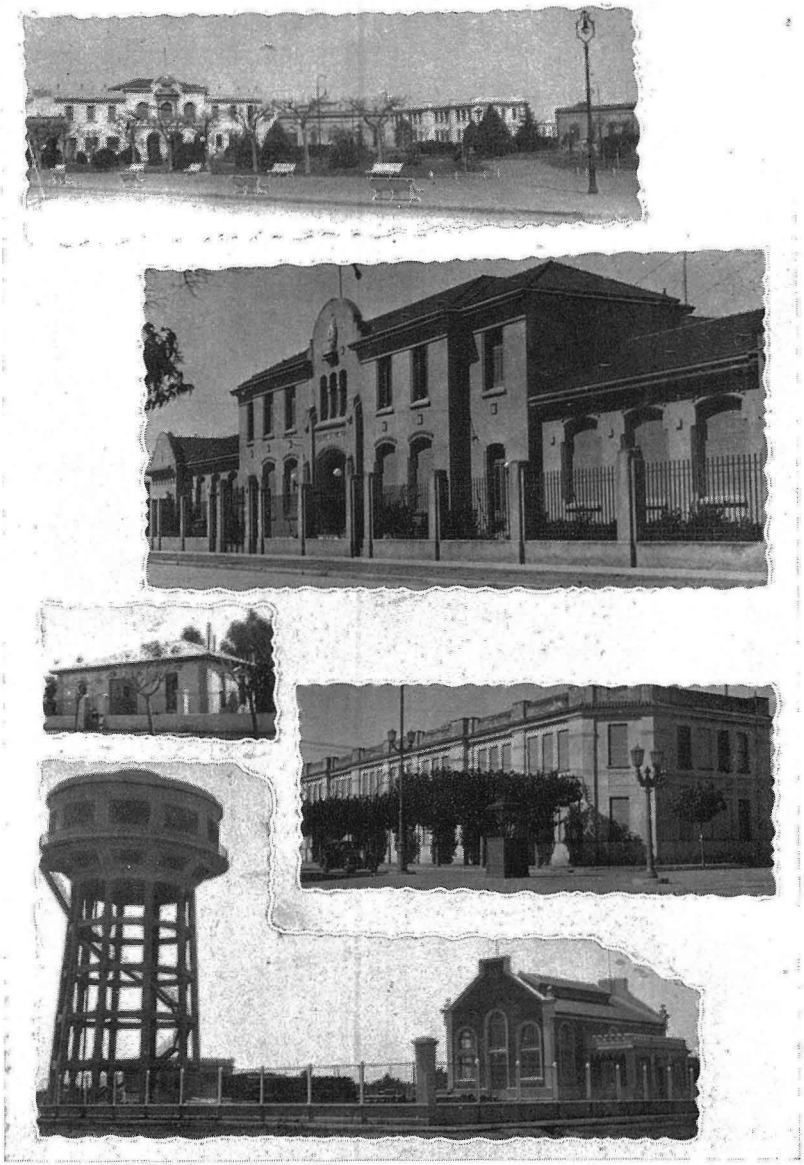
## SANTA ROSA (1921)

The work was established in both Pehuajó and Trenque Lauquen when two new missionary families arrived June 29, 1921, the Lantzes and the Lauvers. We again began to consider the idea of extension. Santa Rosa seemed to be the most logical place to open our third mission center. The Lantzes, although not able to speak the Spanish language, were asked to move to Santa Rosa and occupy until we could send a family there permanently. This they did on July 27, 1921.

*Arrival of the Luayzas*

Albano Luayza upon application was accepted by the Mission Board as a member of our mission in 1921. In November 1921 he and his family were sent to Santa Rosa. Brother Luayza found Santa Rosa a very difficult town to work, being the capital of La Pampa and a center of Catholicism with a population then of 10,000. However, Brother Luayza with his wife and large family stayed by it for nearly eighteen years, after which he was transferred to Alberti in the province of Buenos Aires. In spite of its being a difficult place, through direct preaching, Sunday school, Bible reading, and a kindergarten, the missionaries succeeded in organizing a church. From the initiation of the work in November 1921, until December 1938, seventy-five persons were baptized. Many others who had made a profession moved away before they were baptized.

In writing of his work in Santa Rosa, Brother Luayza says: "I have seen many renounce the world and accept Christ, but I



TOP: Plaza and Municipality, Carlos Casáres
SECOND: Normal School, Pehuajó
THIRD: Pastor's home; Primary School, Carlos Casáres
FOURTH: Water works, Carlos Casáres

also have seen backsliding in some who had appeared to be faithful." He then gives a long list of faithful ones who went to be with the Lord. It is true that more members in Santa Rosa died and others moved away than in any other congregation. The result was that on leaving the work, Brother Luayza had to see only a few members left and some of them not very faithful.

### *Change of Pastors*

On March 20, 1939, the Luayza family left Santa Rosa for Alberti, the Mennonite congregation nearest Buenos Aires. I took charge of the congregation in Santa Rosa at long range by visiting it regularly for a few months until August 1939 when Feliciano Gorjón, wife, and five little boys were transferred from the French congregation to Santa Rosa.

Brother Gorjón finds it still a hard field, but apparently, the work is again encouraging. During the Luayza period of service, a property with a house was purchased and a church house built. Since the Gorjóns are in charge, a small church building was erected in Villa Santillán, a suburb of Santa Rosa.

At the present writing, Santa Rosa has three Sunday schools and preaching services besides a very fine literary gathering and a Young People's Meeting. A number of promising young people have been found, who we trust will make us faithful workers someday. The present membership, January 1942, is twenty-seven.

## CARLOS CASÁRES (1922)

Before launching work in what was to be our first town east of the headquarters, Pehuajó, other towns without the Gospel were visited. Carlos Casáres seemed to be the most appropriate place to begin Gospel work. After living one year in Trenque Lauquen for language study, the Lauvers moved to Carlos Casáres.

It was a town of 10,000 inhabitants, including a large Jewish population. However, there was never much done for the Jewish people in a direct way. Some Jews attended our services and one or two professed conversion, but because of persecution by relatives and friends, they did not continue.

*First Meetings*

On October 4, 1922, Brother Luayza conducted the first series of meetings. The attendance was good and a number confessed Christ. By the close of the first year, a number were in attendance who later became the first pillars of the new church.

*Baptisms, Weddings, Workers*

The first class baptized, March 1923, consisted of five persons; one, a girl then twelve years old, still remains faithful. By the end of 1923, there were twenty members. Of this number, there remain only four elderly sisters and the girl referred to above.

In the same month, March 1923, this congregation held its first communion and its first wedding. Carlos Casáres holds the record in weddings and sending out workers. During the Lauvers' first two terms of service, there were seven weddings. Two of these couples became active workers, took the regular course given in our Bible School, and at present are in charge of congregations. Another couple is helping to take care of an outstation. It also produced three Bible readers and six different ones taught in the kindergarten. This congregation had a loss of twenty-seven members by death, some of whom were quite young.

In 1926 a lot was purchased on which a church and a house were built. The new church was dedicated in 1927 (see further data in Chapter IV, page 100). By this time the membership reached thirty-eight. By the end of 1932, there were seventy members. That year seems to have been the most flourishing one for the Carlos Casáres congregation.

The Lauvers were in charge of this station during their first term, from 1922 to 1927. While on their furlough during 1928 and 1929, Selena N. Gamber with one of our Orphanage boys lived in the mission home and took care of the weekly meetings. The regular preaching services on Sunday were in charge of Bro. Shank who lived at that time in Bragado. On their return from furlough, the Lauvers again took up the work in Carlos Casáres from 1929 to 1937 after which they left on their second furlough, and the Snyders were appointed to take

their place and are the missionaries in charge at this writing (1942).

Carlos Casáres has a colporteur who dedicates all his time to selling Bibles, New Testaments, and Gospels and to distributing tracts. The report shows that in ten months of colportage work in 1941, he sold 130 Bibles, 450 New Testaments, and sold and gave away 1,400 Gospels.

Through the Gospel tent, native Bible readers, kindergarten, Sunday school, Young People's Meetings, direct preaching, and visiting evangelists, when special efforts were put forth, the work in Carlos Casáres has accomplished much for the extension of the Kingdom. The present membership, January 1942, is seventy.

## FRANCISCO MADERO (1923)

In October 1923, Constancio Herrera, a railroad employee in Madero, went to Pehuajó to ask me to visit this town of 2,500 population, eleven miles west of Pehuajó. He showed me a Bible that he had purchased from an Adventist. I accepted the invitation and found that both Mr. Herrera and his wife were converted but needed more light as to what conversion meant, for they had imbibed much of Adventism. In their little cabin ten by fifteen feet, their friends came to read the Scriptures and to sing hymns.

Soon there was a group of believers who agreed to pay the rent for a room if we would continue to visit them regularly. For a time, Brother Cavadore and I visited Madero once every week by auto. While the evenings were warm and clear, the meetings were held in the open yard. When the weather turned cooler, the use of a schoolroom was secured for the meetings. By March 1924, some of the believers were ready for baptism, and seven were received, forming a Mennonite Church in Madero. A Sunday school was organized with good attendance. There were many obstacles to overcome but by His grace, one after another was conquered.

On February 26, 1926, Pablo Cavadore married Marcelina Michelli, a member of the Pehuajó congregation, and they were sent to shepherd the new congregation in Madero, a service which they performed from 1926 to 1930. They were then

TOP: Church and Sunday-school group; interior of church, Tres Lomas
SECOND: Mother and daughter meeting at Tres Lomas: Don Cosme and Doña Carmen, donors of land for Old People's Home in Bragado
THIRD: Don Federico, Bible colporteur, and his wife, Carlos Casáres; Two Sunday-school boys on horseback
FOURTH: Front of church in Tres Lomas; Christian mother and children at Tres Lomas

transferred to Passo, and the work in Madero was taken care of by the pastor in Pehuajó. In October 1931, José Zagami and family were sent to Madero where he labored faithfully until February 1936 when our Italian brother was called to his Beautiful Home.

The pastors who have looked after this congregation were Hershey, Lantz, Litwiller, Shank, Weber, Brenneman, Zagami, and Swartzentruber.

It should be added that two young men from this congregation have been called to preach the Gospel and are active workers at present. One is the son of Constancio Herrera, who was introduced at the beginning of this write-up on Madero, and the other is Anastacio Sierra, who has charge of two congregations southwest of Bragado. The present membership in Madero, January 1942, is seventeen.

## TRES LOMAS (1925)

Tres Lomas, with a population of approximately 3,000, had been visited by Pablo Cavadore in his regular tract distribution trips for two years or more. There was no Catholic Church here. Many people became interested and some among them later became members of the Mennonite Church.

In April 1925, Gospel work was launched by Brother Swartzentruber and wife, accompanied by D. Parke Lantz and wife. Plans were laid to begin public services May 1, but before this date, Doris Swartzentruber, three years old, became sick with intestinal fever. Those were trying days for the Swartzentrubers, who were new in the language, having been on the field only a year. About this experience, Brother Swartzentruber writes: "Nothing was in order in the house, nor in the hall; the language was very difficult; everybody was looking us over, trying to size us up every time we stepped outside of the door. We found ourselves seventy miles southwest of Pehuajó (thirty-eight miles south of Trenque Lauquen), strangers in a strange town."

### *First Evangelistic Meetings*

On May 1 Albano Luayza arrived to begin the first series of meetings. At first it was difficult to get people to enter the hall, but night after night the attendance grew and the interest was

good. About the fifteenth night, the first invitation was given. A large number responded, but as in all new work, many did not know what it all meant. These meetings lasted twenty-three days. Special meetings were held for those who seemed to understand. This made up the first convert class. Thus the work went on and by the end of 1927 twenty were baptized members. By the end of 1932, forty-seven had been received into church membership. In 1926 a vacant lot was bought and a church and pastor's home were erected and occupied in 1927.

In June 1930 the Swartzentrubers went home on furlough, returning in November 1931. During this time José Zagami and family lived at the mission home while he did colportage work. At the same time J. W. Shank was pastor of the congregation, coming from Pehuajó each week end to look after the services. The Swartzentrubers on returning from furlough remained in Tres Lomas until August 1934 when they were transferred to Bragado. At this time J. L. Rutt and wife took charge of the Tres Lomas work and were there until January 1936 when they again took up the work in America. Elsa Shank was asked to live in the home and take care of the midweek services and do visitation work. Brother Swartzentruber and Brother Shank took care of the preaching services in 1936 and 1937, respectively. In December 1937, W. E. Hallman and wife were located in Tres Lomas and are still the missionaries in charge. While Brother Hallman was studying the language, I travelled from Trenque Lauquen to fill the preaching appointments.

Tres Lomas always had very good attendance in Sunday school, having been for years the only town without a Catholic Church. The absence of a Catholic Church from the beginning gave a free hand to the workers. In 1940, a Catholic Church was built facing the Center Square and its influence has been felt through the town. The present membership in Tres Lomas, January 1942 is fifty-six.

## AMERICA (1926)

America was the eighth town to be opened for mission work, having at that time a population of about 6,000. It lies forty-eight miles north of Trenque Lauquen. One year and four

months after arriving on the field, J. L. Rutt and wife moved to this place, the exact date being June 10, 1926. Several missionaries with their cars and a truck did the moving. The Rutts had spent the previous time in language study and helping along in the work in Carlos Casáres, Pehuajó, and Trenque Lauquen.

### *First Public Services*

For six months no services were held in a public way, but thousands of tracts were distributed and many personal contacts were made. In January 1927, a hall was rented and public services were begun. To this date, the same hall is being used, the difference being that it is now the property of the mission.

Brother Luayza was the first evangelist to hold meetings here. The attendance and interest were good. Some of the first ones attending became members of the church and remained faithful until death. Some came out of curiosity. One young woman said, "This appears to be a church, but there are no saints." One night when the invitation was given, the whole congregation stood up. This showed that they did not understand; however, slowly, but with much difficulty, the work went forward.

### *First Baptismal Services*

In March 1928, nine persons were baptized. This was the beginning of the church in America. Later in the year, five more were baptized and one was received by letter making fifteen members at the close of 1928.

### *Change of Pastors*

In July 1932, the Rutts went home on furlough. On August 2 the Snyders took charge of the work. The next year with the help of Elvira Armenino, one of our Orphanage girls, a kindergarten was opened. According to the America station report of 1932, several were baptized during the year and the hall was well filled at the regular services. The Sunday-school attendance reached eighty-six, with an average of sixty-two for the year. The time arrived for the Snyders' furlough and the Rutts again took charge of this congregation and are in charge at present (1942).

TOP: Bragado Church, car, loudspeaker and tent trailer; pastoral helpers
SECOND: Two young sisters; Sunday-school groups of Bragado Church
THIRD: Mr. and Mrs. Coma; Don Casimiro and wife of the Orphanage truck farm; Doña Francisca, can't read but can pray

One of the sad things in this work was the dissenting of a few members and starting a work of their own. Later, they affiliated with the Pentecostals, who sent single women workers to America. Their work never did prosper, but made it very difficult for the Mennonites, and was a misfortune for the evangelical work in general. At present this reverse seems to have been overcome and a good spiritual condition is reigning. The present membership in America, January 1942, is nineteen.

### MERIDIANO QUINTO (1926)

This is a small town of 2,000 people, twenty-four miles west of America. It has been in charge of the pastor in America. It was formerly a Methodist work. In May 1926 the work was turned over to the Mennonites. The second station master was the only active member there. Later he moved away. Both the Rutts and the Snyders visited this town from America. With the exception of a very few who were converted but soon moved away, the work here did not develop. At the present time, it is visited periodically by the Rutts. At the close of 1941 there were no members in Meridiano Quinto.

### BRAGADO (1926)

The exact date as to the first missionary efforts put forth in this town of 15,000 or more population cannot be given. Missionary work was begun by the Methodists many years before March 1926, the year when the Mennonites began to occupy. For lack of workers, the Methodists had abandoned the place. There were some believers in Bragado that held services for a time on the same corner, but not in the same building, where our present church building is located. A Nazarene pastor at one time visited Bragado regularly at intervals, as also did the Salvation Army workers. As may be seen on the map, Bragado is about 125 miles southwest of Buenos Aires.

#### *Work Opened*

On December 22, 1925, Brethren Lauver and Shank and the Lantzes went to Bragado to investigate the possibility of opening a mission there. The missionary group assembled in Pehuajó, March 1926, was informed of their findings. After

some discussion pro and con, it was decided at this meeting that the Lantzes should be sent to Bragado. This was done and they moved there March 31, 1926.

A house and hall were rented April 26 and Gospel work was begun. On May 1, 1927, seven persons were baptized. Six of these are still members in some church; one died in 1930. Every year since, there have been baptisms of old and young, and the church has grown. It always was, and is yet, one of the most spiritual congregations in the district.

As in other towns, because of furloughs, those in charge had to be changed. The Lantzes continued in charge until July 28, 1927 when they went home on their first furlough. The Shanks then took over the work until January 1929 when the Lantzes were again in charge until August 1934. The Swartzentrubers were there from August 1934 until January 1936, from which date until the present time the Litwillers have been in charge of Bragado congregation.

Good work is being done by the three Sunday schools. The central one has passed the one hundred mark in attendance. The Young People's Meeting is alive with good attendance and interest. The Literary Society has had at times as many as seventy to one hundred present. The prayer meetings and women's meetings are all well attended. At the present time, with Bragado as the home of the Orphanage and the Bible School, the congregation has perhaps the largest attendance of any of our churches.

From this center, workers are sent out to Alberti, Mechita, Ó'Brien, Comodoro Py, Warnes, M. Fernández, La Limpia, and Olascoaga. In some of these places there are organized congregations. The present membership in Bragado, January 1942, is sixty-eight.

## MECHITA (1926)

This railway town of more than 2,000 inhabitants lies five miles to the east of Bragado. Some of the Western Railroad shops are located here. The Methodists began working here as early as 1921. Later as the work developed, started by a lay member, it was looked after by the pastor of the Methodist Church in Chivilcoy.

In April 1926, the Methodists handed over the work to the Mennonites since it was nearer Bragado than Chivilcoy. Brother Lantz, pastor in Bragado, took charge of the work in Mechita. In October 1928, Pablo Cavadore held a series of meetings in which much interest was aroused. Sunday school and young people's work were organized and these activities gave new life to the congregation. Mechita has produced workers who are spreading the Gospel news to their fellow countrymen elsewhere. A former Methodist, who united with us, sold us a lot very cheap, on which a small church building was erected. The different pastors in charge of the Bragado and Alberti congregations supplied the pastoral oversight of the Mechita congregation.

Elsa Shank at the time when her parents were in charge, organized a sewing class among the younger girls. She taught them sewing. This seemed to be a very good endeavor among these people, who often do not know how to mend and make their own clothing.

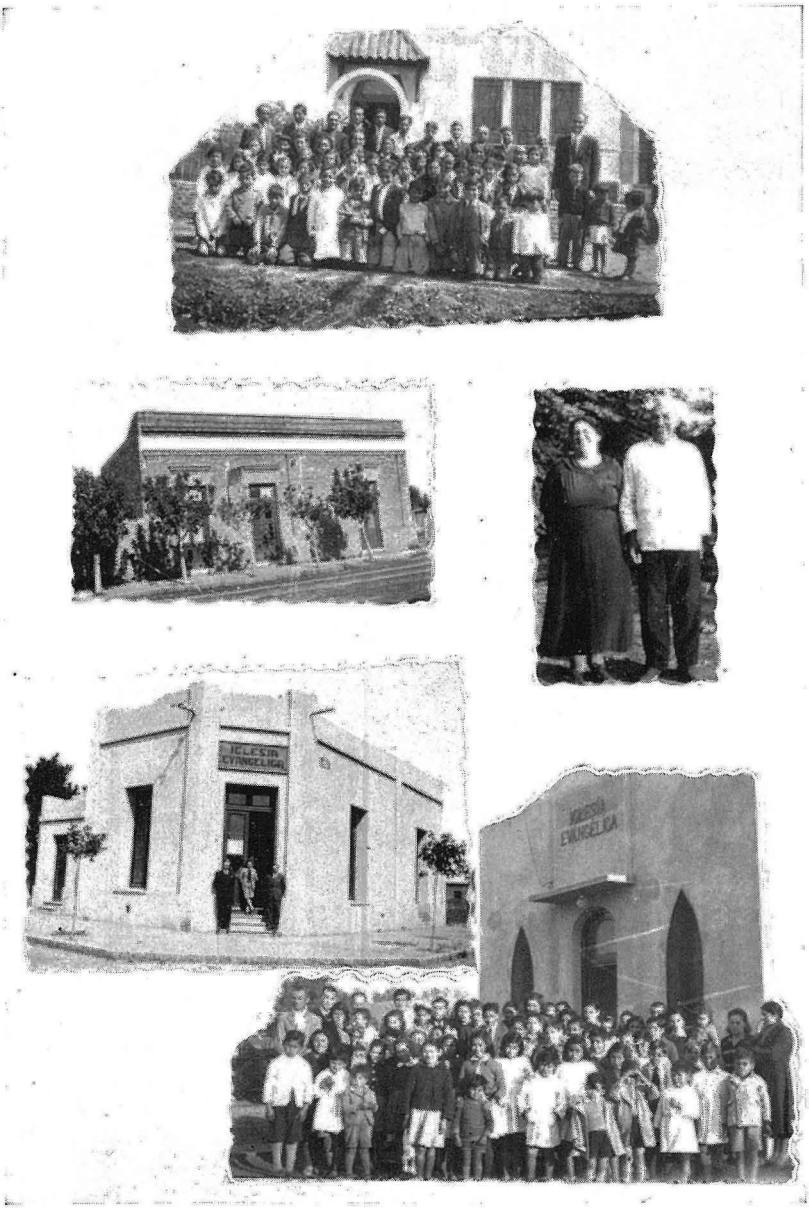
Brother Luayza, when in charge of the congregation while pastor of Alberti, succeeded in helping the congregation to create a fund for building an addition to the present church house for Sunday-school classes. The present membership of Mechita, January 1942, is thirteen.

## PASSO (1929)

This town of 2,500, lies twenty-four miles west of Pehuajó and twenty-seven miles east of Trenque Lauquen Gospel services were opened by Feliciano Gorjón in January 1929. Pablo Cavadore and family were transferred to Passo from Madero in March 1930, and Brother Gorjón to Pehuajó.

The work was always rather difficult. One reason was due to the railroad running east and west, dividing the town into almost two equal parts, one half being Radical in politics and the other half, Conservative. It can be said here as in Christ's time, "The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans." These two political parties do not have, or do not care to have, any dealings with each other. This makes Gospel work difficult.

Three years later, Brother Cavadore wrote, "It was always my desire to see a church established here. Now after three




TOP: Sunday school at Quiroga
SECOND: Front of America property: Don Camilo and Doña María Petrella
THIRD: Mission chapel in Pellegrini
FOURTH: Church and group in Villa Santillan, Santa Rosa

years the first three candidates are ready for baptism." In the same year six others had made a profession but did not make a definite decision. Brother Cavadore continues in reference to the difficulties of work in a small town; he says: "In the smaller towns, nearly everybody follows the opinion of two or three influential people, and if it occurs to such to say that one should not accept the Gospel, there will be few who will do so." The above is especially true of Passo, but still we keep on sowing the seed.

In June 1932, Brother Cavadore and family were transferred to Pellegrini, and the work in Passo was attended to by the pastor from Trenque Lauquen. Quintina Gutiérrez, a graduate from our Bible School, has been living in Passo for some time, conducting a Sunday school and doing personal work. Much seed-sowing has been done in Passo through colporteurs, tent meetings, and personal work, but there has been no success in establishing a flourishing congregation there. During these years several were baptized, but some have died and others have backslidden. The present membership in Passo, January 1942, is three.

### PELLEGRINI (1930)

Pellegrini is a town of 3,000, lying thirty-two miles west of Trenque Lauquen. The actual opening of Gospel work here began in May 1930 by Swartzentruber and Luayza. The town had been visited as early as 1922 by Brethren Shank and Lauver and later Brother Lantz then pastor in Trenque Lauquen.

In 1923, a railroad pass was granted to Pablo Cavadore, who lived in Pehuajó at the time, but travelled over the district, east to 9 de Julio, west to Santa Rosa and Toay, and southwest to Tres Lomas and Salliqueló, distributing *El Camino Verdadero* (*The True Way*) and other tracts. It was at that time that Brother Cavadore visited Pellegrini periodically. It was because of his contacts with some individuals there that a permanent work was established.

In May 1930, a hall was rented, benches were made, and a series of meetings began with the usual enthusiasm and good attendance. Also, as usual, there were those who tried to break up the meetings. One evening while Brother Luayza was preaching, a brick nearly hit him on the head. Often in begin-

ning a new work, it is expected that there will be trouble makers. Usually they disturb in a way less violent than throwing bricks, as yelling in at the door or window, whistling and laughing, and so on. The meetings continued for two weeks with the visible result that nine individuals manifested a desire to follow Christ.

Since no worker was located in Pellegrini, the work was attended by the following brethren from Trenque Lauquen: myself, pastor of the congregation; E. V. Snyder, in charge of the Orphanage; and F. Gorjón, student in the Bible School and helper in Trenque Lauquen.

### *First Stationed Workers*

In March 1931 it was decided by the then Argentine Mission Board to send Anita Cavadore, our first Argentine worker, to Pellegrini to conduct Sunday school and to open a kindergarten. June 9, 1932, Pablo Cavadore and family were sent, he to be the first resident pastor.

The work then took on new life and in December of that year, nine persons were received by baptism. Brother Cavadore wrote thus: "The attendance was very good (1932) and more than once it reached to 150 in ordinary meetings. But there came a tremendous persecution from a group of young men, who succeeded in breaking up some of the preaching services, to the extent that it was necessary to suspend some of our meetings." In spite of said persecution, the work in Pellegrini has been quite encouraging. In 1939 a building was purchased and remodelled for a hall, which gives this town a permanent place of worship.

In February 1934 Anita Cavadore was transferred to 30 de Agosto, and in 1940 Brother Cavadore and family moved to Trenque Lauquen to give their son the advantage of a higher school of learning, The Arts and Trade School. Brother Cavadore continued in charge of the work in Pellegrini until June 1942 when on account of the health of his wife and sister-in-law, it became necessary to move to a higher altitude. They located in Capilla del Monte, Cosquín, Córdoba.

At the present time (1942) the work in Pellegrini is taken care of by us from the Trenque Lauquen station. We go there

on the train every Saturday morning and return in the evening. The present membership in Pellegrini, January 1942, is sixteen.

## TREINTA (30) DE AGOSTO (1930)

Treinta de Agosto is a town of about 2,000 population and lies thirty miles south of Trenque Lauquen and twenty-one miles east of Tres Lomas. Brother Snyder and I passed through this town in July 1930, and while we were distributing tracts, a number of people requested us to open Gospel work. We were on our way to the Pastors' Meeting, and there presented the appeal.

The result was that in September of the same year, Brethren Snyder, Zagami the colporteur, and I held a ten-day series of street meetings from the Bible Coach. During the day Bibles and books were sold; tracts were distributed, and interested families were visited. Previous to our work, Pablo Cavadore had often visited 30 de Agosto in his tract distribution trips. These visits promoted good attendance at our meetings.

The people were told that if a sufficient number were interested, arrangements would be made to hold weekly meetings. Fifty-nine signed asking us to establish a regular work there. Not all of these were converted, but some were. A hall was rented and Brother Shank took charge. The following year, because of bad train service between Pehuajó and 30 de Agosto, the work was turned over to Brother Snyder and myself, who drove over from Trenque Lauquen, had a service, and returned the same evening.

On February 4, 1934, Anita Cavadore was transferred from Pellegrini to 30 de Agosto. She has charge of the Sunday school, Young People's Meeting, converts' class, kindergarten, and visitation work, all except the preaching which for a number of years has been supplied by the pastor in Tres Lomas. The present pastor is W. E. Hallman, who drives here once a week to conduct the preaching services. The present membership in 30 de Agosto, January 1942, is thirteen.

## MAZA (1931)

Maza, a town of 2,500 people, is situated on the Southern Railroad and is about thirty-two miles southwest of Tres

Lomas. In 1926 Brethren Swartzentruber and Cavadore, accompanied by Edward López, a member of Tres Lomas congregation but since gone to his Home beyond, visited Maza with the idea of distributing tracts and of getting acquainted with the place. The brethren were heartily received and invited to return.

In 1930, the colporteur, José Zagami, spent several days in Maza. He placed many Bibles, New Testaments, and Gospels in the town. He was able to get some seventy signers, soliciting for a work to be established in Maza. In June 1931 it was decided that I should open work in Maza and attend it from Trenque Lauquen.

### *First Meetings*

The first meeting was held in a room ten by twelve feet with an attendance of twelve men and one woman; all except the woman smoked. Since there were no windows and the open door was filled by people standing in it, the air became such that it could not be endured any longer. I went to the door and swung it back and forth, saying, "We want to let some of God's good air enter." One after the other threw their cigarettes away.

A hall was rented and a series of meetings were conducted with Brother Luayza as evangelist. Much interest was manifested. The rent was paid from the beginning by those who had solicited for the opening of work.

One year later, June 1932, Pablo Cavadore began to attend the work in Maza from Pellegrini. This he did faithfully until 1941 when this town was exchanged for General Villegas, a town fifty miles north of America.

Several were baptized at the beginning of 1941 when it was turned over to the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The congregation could no longer pay the rent on account of the drought in La Pampa. Some who had helped died and others moved away. The Mennonites no longer have charge of Maza.

## MOCTEZUMA (1931)

On September 3, 1931, Gospel services were opened in this small town of 1,500 inhabitants, sixteen miles north of Carlos

Casáres. The Lauvers, then in charge of Carlos Casáres, opened the work here.

The first meetings were held in an empty store building, all the shelves and counters having been left. One long counter served as pulpit, and the others were used as seats.

One year later, September 6, 1932, fourteen believers were baptized. In April 1933 Brother Cavadore held special meetings with good results. In November of the same year the Di Pietros and I conducted tent meetings. In 1935 the tent was used in this town by the Lauvers. Brother Shank held meetings in Moctezuma from November 30 to December 3, 1938.

In 1939 special effort was put forth by folks from the Carlos Casáres congregation to place a tract or a Gospel in every home. Since 1937, Brother Snyder, present pastor of the Carlos Casáres congregation, has been taking care of this outstation. The present membership of Moctezuma, January 1942, is twelve.

### SMITH (1932)

Smith is a small town sixteen miles west of Moctezuma having a population of 2,000. The station was opened by the Lauvers from Carlos Casáres, who visited this place weekly.

Six persons were baptized; October 26, 1933, these members formed the congregation in Smith. At different times, special evangelistic campaigns were conducted through the tent and Bible Coach by Brother Cavadore and others.

In March 1938, Elvira Armenino was sent to Smith as a worker and to help in Moctezuma and Carlos Casáres. She was in charge of the Sunday school, which had an average attendance of twenty-six. She also conducted a kindergarten and taught the first grade. She distributed many tracts and read the Bible weekly in many homes.

Sister Elvira left Smith, March 1939, to take up a course in nursing in Buenos Aires. The Snyders continue making regular visits to Smith. Some members moved away; others have died; and some have backslidden. The membership in Smith, January 1942, is four.

### ALBERTI (1933)

Alberti, a town of about 4,000 inhabitants, lies twelve miles east of Bragado. We have no record of the first missionaries

who sowed the seed in this town. When Brother Lantz lived in Bragado, he made periodical visits to distribute tracts and offer Bibles, New Testaments, and Gospels.

On one such visit, Brother Lantz was accompanied by his wife and Brethren Zagami and Gorjón. They asked permission of the chief of police to hold open air meetings, but were refused because the country was in the "state of siege" (martial law). They then visited the town, house to house. A hall was rented and they began a series of meetings, which seemed to be a real success until one night a police official arrived and ordered the three brethren, Lantz, Zagami, and Gorjón, to accompany him to the police station.

There Brother Lantz received rather harsh treatment. Brother Zagami and Gorjón were then examined, and perhaps because the latter seemed but a boy, he was allowed to return to the hall to inform Sister Lantz that both her husband and Brother Zagami were in the lockup. It was not long, however, until they were able to convince the authorities who they were, their mission, and purpose of the meetings, after which they were given their liberty.

In February 1933 Brother Gorjón and family were sent to take charge of the work in Alberti. Many and varied were his experiences. At first there was great interest, and the hall was filled. In a short time twenty were baptized. Alberti had the misfortune to have many of its members move to Buenos Aires in search of work.

Brother Gorjón continued in charge until the midyear Mission Council, 1935, when it was decided to move the Webers from Pehuajó to Alberti and the Gorjóns to the town of French to open work there.

Brother Weber and wife labored faithfully until March 1937 when because of the Lantzes' going home on furlough, they were transferred to Cosquín, Córdoba, to take charge of the work there.

This left Alberti without a resident pastor. It was visited by the Bragado workers until March 1939 when Brother Luayza was transferred from Santa Rosa to Alberti. He continued until April 1942 when the Luayzas moved to Ramos Mejía, a suburb of Buenos Aires.

Constancio Herrera and wife, students in the Bragado Bible School, are living in Alberti and taking care of the meetings. The present membership in Alberti, January 1942, is thirteen.

## GUANACO (1933)

This is a small outstation of 1,500 inhabitants, sixteen miles east of Pehuajó. The Gospel was first taken there by Brother Zagami, the colporteur. In September 1933, he wrote: "A happy result of Bible colportage in the town of Guanaco was that many who had images on their walls made a housecleaning of these vain things and want to serve God in spirit and truth. They gave their testimony among their neighbors who became interested."

Soon after this, Brother Litwiller, accompanied by the Bible School students of Pehuajó, visited this place regularly. On May 15, 1934, a church was organized there when eight persons were baptized and given communion. Later in 1934, when I and the Di Pietros held a tent and Bible Coach campaign, several made the wise choice. Some months afterwards several of these were baptized.

Guanaco has never had a resident worker, but has been visited weekly from Carlos Casáres, French, and Pehuajó. The present membership in Guanaco, January 1942, is eight.

## LONQUIMAY (1933)

Lonquimay is a town thirty-eight miles east of Santa Rosa, and in 1933 had about 3,000 population. As early as 1923, Sotero Garcia, who was a colporteur in our district, spent several days here selling Bibles and New Testaments. Later Brother Cavadore made monthly visits distributing tracts and doing personal work.

Brethren Luayza and Litwiller conducted street meetings with the Bible Coach. This created much enthusiasm and upwards of 400 people gathered night after night to listen to the Gospel.

In 1933 a hall was rented and the work was started in an official way. Brother Luayza was appointed to look after the work from Santa Rosa. During the years of active mission work, many were converted. In 1934, fourteen were baptized

and later ten more were added to the number. Three died, and as it happened in many of the towns in our district, the drought and other unavoidable changes caused members and converts to move to other sections of the country.

In 1939 a property was bought, and a hall was remodeled, which gives the place the appearance of permanency. This town has been taken care of alternately by our native brethren, Luayza, Cavadore, and Gorjón. Brother Gorjón is in charge at present and visits once a week from Santa Rosa. The present membership of Lonquimay, January 1942, is eleven.

### MARTINEZ DE HOZ (1933)

This is a small town of 1,000 inhabitants, eleven miles west of Quiroga. In May 1933, Brother and Sister Barbosa lived there and did Gospel work until April 1934 when they moved to Quiroga. There was never any response that justified continuing with a resident worker. At one time a group seemed to be interested and met twice a week for services but could not be brought to a definite decision for the Lord. There were no conversions and therefore no baptisms.

Martinez de Hoz is one of the most radical towns we ever entered. Threats were made on the worker's life, and on one occasion were carried out by shooting a revolver at him. The bullet missed him and hit the door near where he was standing. The result was that the Barbosas were transferred to Quiroga from which place Martinez de Hoz is visited occasionally.

### QUIROGA (1934)

Quiroga, of about 2,000 population, is situated on the railroad running from Olascoaga to America. Olascoaga is eleven miles west of Bragado, and Quiroga is forty-eight miles northwest of Olascoaga. We have no record of the first Gospel services held in Quiroga. The Christian and Missionary Alliance visited it for some years from 9 de Julio, a town halfway between Bragado and Carlos Casáres. After the Alliance had practically abandoned Quiroga, a few believers visited Brother Lauver in Carlos Casáres and asked that the Mennonites conduct services there.

In 1933, when our tent and Bible Coach were in Martinez de Hoz, eleven miles west of Quiroga, the believers in Quiroga came to ask that the tent might be set up there. This was done, and there were several who manifested the desire to follow the Lord.

On March 2, 1934, a hall was rented and in the following month the Barbosas moved from Martinez de Hoz to Quiroga and have been in charge of the work ever since. In October 1935, fifteen were baptized. From the beginning of the work to date, thirty-five persons have been received into church membership. Some have moved away.

The mission purchased a lot and house, remodeled it, and built a church house, which was dedicated in 1936. The present membership in Quiroga, January 1942, is twenty-six.

## COSQUÍN, CÓRDOBA, AND DISTRICT (1935)

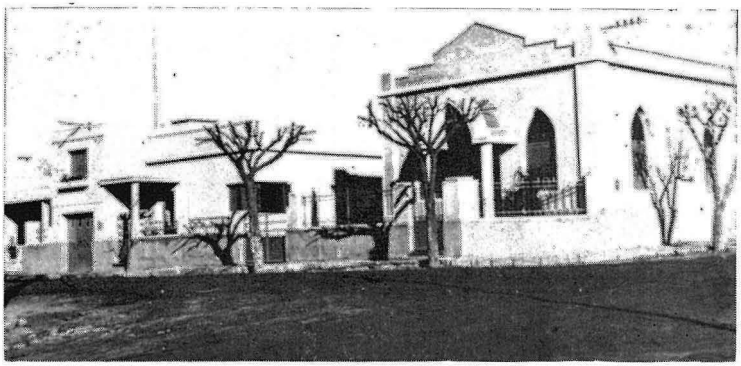
It had been thought for some time that the Argentine Mennonite Mission should extend her borders to other provinces. At the annual conference held in Trenque Lauquen in 1934, Brethren Weber and Lantz were appointed to make an investigating trip to San Luís and Córdoba, having in mind the establishing of missions in them. Nothing very favorable seemed to result from this trip.

In August 1934 the Swartzentrubers took charge of the Bragado congregation, and the Lantzes were free to keep on making investigation. They visited Córdoba, La Pampa, and different towns in the province of Buenos Aires.

In May 1935 another investigating committee was appointed, consisting of Brethren Swartzentruber, Shank, and Lauver. They traveled north through Santa Fe and Córdoba and returned by the territory of La Pampa. Their report was that there were large sections where no permanent work existed. Cosquín was finally selected as a possible center from which the country north of the city of Córdoba could be worked. Its population at that time was 10,000.

### *First Meeting in Cosquín*

It was decided that the Lantzes be sent to Cosquín to initiate the work of the Mennonites in the province of Córdoba. They



TOP: Cosquín Church and Pastor's Home
SECOND: Cosquín Congregation
THIRD: Quiroga Chapel and house

arrived June 15, 1935. They soon found a house suitable for a dwelling and also for services.

At the first Sunday school, July 7, six adults and two children were present. Soon folks who had come to Cosquín for their health and some of whom were evangelicals began to attend the meetings.

One of the touching incidents was to find a young man who had been a pupil in the Pehuajó Sunday School when a boy. He had gone to Cosquín for relief from his tubercular condition. He became converted and before passing out of this world, due to that dreadful disease tuberculosis, Antonio D'Errico accepted Christ as his Saviour.

The Webers were transferred from Alberti to Cosquín on March 20, 1937, while the Lantzes went home on furlough. The Webers did very good work and remained until the Lantzes returned in December 1938. The Webers then returned to the province of Buenos Aires and took charge of the Bible Coach and tent until they went home on furlough, a few months later. The present membership, January 1942, in Cosquín is seventeen.

## LA FALDA

On January 1, 1941, Calvin L. Holderman and family went to the Cosquín district. They had been living in Bragado for language study for a year. At present (1942) they are living in La Falda, the second town where regular Gospel services are held. Since they moved here only recently, there are as yet no members.

## CAPILLA DEL MONTE

Pablo Cavadore and family moved to the Cosquín district on June 27, 1942. The reason for moving was twofold: Sister Cavadore suffers with arthritis, and her sister Celina (an orphan who has her home with her sister) has severe bronchial trouble. The doctor advised a higher altitude. The Lantzes have been praying for help in the great harvest field, and in this way the Lord answered. The Cavadores moved to Capilla del Monte where they have opened a third station in the province of Córdoba.

One of the problems of establishing a congregation in the hills of Córdoba is the changing of the population. Many go there for their health, and when they have recovered, they return to their former home. Others after being converted are called to be with Christ, which is far better. Another problem is the coming of members of other denominations, who bring their own ideas and doctrines with them. Sometimes converts become confused as a result.

The purchasing of a lot and erecting a house and church in Cosquín has given a new impulse to the work in the hills and has greatly inspired the believers.

## FRENCH (1935)

French is a small town of perhaps 3,000 population, twenty-two miles east of Carlos Casáres. Brother Luayza said that twenty-two years ago when he was pastor in 9 de Julio, he visited this town with tracts and the Gospel.

The actual work by the Mennonites began on October 13, 1935. Feliciano Gorjón was transferred from Alberti to this place. The plan was to start off the meetings with an evangelistic campaign with Brother Litwiller as evangelist, but it rained every night so that only one sermon was preached. The meetings were postponed until October 29 when Brother Luayza held the series of meetings. There were some confessions but no baptism until December 31, 1936. Two young men, Pablo and Angel Darino, were baptized and these later became pillars in the Church. Since then others of the family have become faithful members of the Church.

A big machine shop, bought in 1940, was torn down and made into a church.

In August 1939 Brother Gorjón and family were transferred to Santa Rosa, and Brother Luayza from Alberti took charge of the work in French, making weekly visits by train. At present, Brother Snyder looks after the congregation since it is nearer to Carlos Casáres than to any other town where there is a Mennonite resident pastor.

Recently several of the active members have moved to 9 de Julio on account of their work, but they continue to worship in the town of French and assist Brother Snyder in the work there,

and still hold their membership there. The present membership in French, January 1942, is thirteen.

## Ó'BRIEN (1936)

Ó'Brien, with a population of 1,000, is an outstation of Bragado, about twenty-five miles north. Although visited by different pastors from Bragado, especially by Brother Lantz, who made the first visits, it was not considered a permanent work until the year 1936. At this time two individuals who held their membership elsewhere for years were received by letter into the Mennonite Church. Later, others were received, but like other outstations, the work has never developed as it should have.

Brother Litwiller, in charge in 1940, writes: "In spite of tent campaigns and the hall, which was given gratis by one of the members, and after having visited all the homes with the distribution of Gospels and tracts, we have not been able to get the work to go forward in this town."

Preaching and Sunday school are conducted every Lord's Day in charge of students and the pastor from Bragado. In their absence, José Bracco, a very faithful member, has charge of the services. Evangelistic and Gospel tent meetings are conducted every year; still the people do not respond. but they have the Gospel testimony. The present membership in Ó'Brien, January 1942, is six.

## LA NIÑA (1939)

This is an outstation near Quiroga, in charge of Brother Barbosa, a worker living in Quiroga. Its population is 1,000. The first baptism in La Niña was a servant girl who worked in the Barbosa home. She was baptized, however, in Quiroga. This girl had a remarkable experience. It is hoped that someday she will become a worker. She at one time took a short course in the Bible School in Bragado, and gave evidence of being a good student. It was through her that the Gospel is being taken to her home town, La Niña. Five have been baptized. Weekly services are conducted. The present membership in La Niña, January 1942, is three.

## BUENOS AIRES (1941)

### *Preliminary Proceedings*

Owing to the long drought a few years ago, many of the members of the Mennonite congregations began to move to Buenos Aires in search of work. One congregation lost in this way thirty members in one year. It was therefore decided in our Mission Council, January 23-25, 1939, that, since more than sixty members of the different Mennonite congregations are now living in Buenos Aires, the bishops should investigate as to what should be done and make such recommendations as thought best. Their recommendation was brought to the Mission Council, January 3, 1940 when the following resolution was passed: "That Litwiller, Hershey, and Shank be named a committee to further investigate as to the advisability of opening mission work in the city of Buenos Aires, and in the meantime, hold services for our members who can attend, and if necessary, find a Church home for those who cannot attend."

A circular letter was then sent to all our members whose addresses we had, to meet us on a certain date in Buenos Aires. At that meeting, Brother Litwiller and I met several members from different churches of our interior towns. The majority expressed themselves as favoring the establishment of a Mennonite Church somewhere in the city. During the year, services were conducted by Brethren Litwiller and Shank in a Jewish Mission Hall.

### *First Permanent Steps*

On August 22 and 23, 1940, at the midyear Mission Council, with S. C. Yoder present, it was decided that until the end of the current year a new work be opened as a tryout in some unoccupied part of the city of Buenos Aires. Brother Yoder authorized that up to five hundred pesos be allowed for rent and equipment until the end of the year, also that the arrangement for the work be made by the same committee appointed in January 1940, namely, Brethren Litwiller, Shank, and myself.

On September 15, 1940, Brother Shank and I rented a hall at 152 Parané Street, Buenos Aires. The first services were held

there on September 22 with a goodly number present. Brother Shank had direct charge. It was observed, however, that the location was too central to get outsiders to attend the meetings, as it was on the second floor and in the heart of a business section.

The missionaries believed that workers should be placed in Buenos Aires and that a different location should be secured. Accordingly, it was decided in Mission Council, December 18-21, 1940, that the Webers should live in Buenos Aires and take over the work in a new section of the city. A house with a front room large enough for services, was rented at 1087 Tejedor Street. The first meeting held in the new location was on January 19, 1941, thus beginning the work in a more permanent way. The members who conveniently can, attend, but for some it is almost impossible since they live miles away.

The first baptismal services were held on September 28, 1941, followed by the first communion service on October 5. When members now leave our congregations to go to the city, they are given a church letter to be placed with the brethren of like faith.

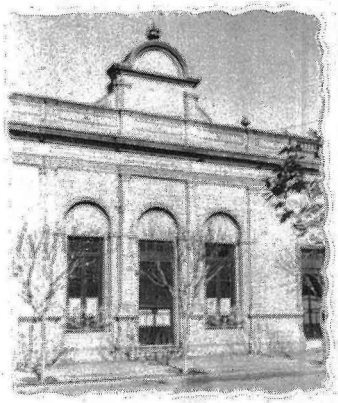
It should be said here that if a Mennonite Church had been established earlier in Buenos Aires, the membership there would be larger. Some had already affiliated themselves with other denominations while others were carried away by the new environment of city life and were lost to the Church.

The organized church services, Sunday school, and young people's work, are attracting our young people to our own Church and in due time a large congregation may be anticipated.

Before this was sent in for publication, Brother Weber informed the missionaries of his new address. It is Puan 1427. The hall is on another street near by. This was necessary since the front room in the other house was small for church services. The present membership in Buenos Aires, January 1942, is seventeen.

## GENERAL VILLEGAS (1941)

General Villegas is a town located about fifty miles directly north of America and has a population of some 12,000. It was formerly a work of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Due



TOP: Group in Parque Chacabuco, Buenos Aires
SECOND: Hall used by mission, Villegas; entrance to hall at La Falda, Córdoba
THIRD: Four generations of native Argentines; a native family, Villegas

to the lack of workers and the inconsistent living of one of their pastors, who lived in adultery for a time, the work was finally abandoned. For five years, no mission work was done there. Some of the members moved away; others became so discouraged that they ceased attending a weekly meeting which a few remaining faithful ones held in their homes.

The Alliance proposed to us to exchange the town of Maza for Villegas. Maza is on the Southern Railway, running from Pico to Bahía Blanca, on which line they have established mission stations. Another reason for making their suggestion was that they thought that the Mennonites could reach Villegas more easily from America than could the Alliance pastor from Pico. This pastor had been caring for the flock in Villegas before it was abandoned.

The Alliance representative, Alejandro Fanderwud, met the Mennonite Brethren Shank, Luayza, and myself in Buenos Aires where officially the exchange was made. February 26, 1941. It was decided that the Brennemans should move to Villegas to take up the work and reorganize it anew.

### *First Services*

In March 1941, the first Sunday school and the first preaching services were conducted. Both services were well attended, and the people were glad to know that mission work would again be carried on in their town.

It was a difficult task again to create confidence. However, it was done through prayer, and the congregation was reorganized April 12, 1942. Thirteen members were received and four others were to be received later. I was present and held a series of meetings and explained the doctrines of the Bible as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. All are happy and the work seems to be going forward. Samuel E. Miller and wife lived in Villegas while studying the language and at the same time helped in the work.

With Villegas as a center, there are good-sized towns east and west to which the Gospel should be carried. Some of them are visited periodically by the Brennemans and Millers, but more workers are needed for this section of our field. The

present membership in General Villegas, received after January 1942, is thirteen.

### AMEGHINO (1941)

Ameghino, a city of 3,000 inhabitants, lies thirty-six miles east of General Villegas. Gospel work was done here by the Christian and Missionary Alliance from Villegas but was also abandoned by them. One converted man and wife in Ameghino are doing all they can to develop the work. He is a mechanic and is thought of as a Christian by all who know him. We have been asked to continue to work the town and to send workers to visit the homes and encourage the converts. At the present time there is no one that can give all his time at this place.

The Brennemans in Villegas make weekly visits to Ameghino and report that through the efforts of the tent campaign there are a number of converts. It is hoped that soon there will be those who may desire baptism and that a Mennonite Church will be established in Ameghino. At present there is no membership in Ameghino.

### SALTO (1941)

This town has two names as is the case in some towns. A village carries a name; later a railroad is run through and for some reason the name is changed, but still the former name is used by some. According to the map, Salto is the railroad station and M. Ugarte is the county and may have been the name in anterailroad days. In sending mail, both names are written (M. Ugarte) Salto. It is a town of ten or twelve thousand inhabitants and about 100 miles north of Buenos Aires.

When the Lauvers returned from their second furlough in July 1941, a midyear Mission Council was held. It was then decided that they with Brother Litwiller should investigate the district of Salto in view of a possible new district.

Mr. Pablo Penzotti had previously mentioned Rojas, a town where the Methodists had a mission, but for lack of workers could not continue with the work. Mr. Penzotti is the Methodist superintendent of the district in which Rojas is situated. On the trip to Salto, the committee went to Rojas also where they found a small chapel built largely by the members, on a lot donated by one of the members. They then investigated the town of Arrecifes and found it to be about the same size as

Salto or Rojas. Off in another direction was Sarmiento, a beautiful place of about 10,000 population. With the exception of Rojas, there was no established work in any of these towns.

It was therefore decided that the Lauvers move to Salto, which seems to be the hub of the wheel; the other towns which have been mentioned lie within easy reach by auto, bus, or train. The Lauvers moved to Salto in August 1941 and began at once to visit these towns with Bibles, New Testaments, Gospels, and tracts.

On September 1, 1941, they began to hold public meetings in the front room of the house which they had rented in Salto. Not so many came at first, but gradually the number increased. In November the tent was in the Salto district and was erected in Rojas, Salto, and Arrecifes. This aroused much interest and gave the Lauvers access to many homes.

## ROJAS

Mr. Pablo Penzotti, the district superintendent of the Rojas congregation, invited me to come to Rojas and receive the work there in an official way. The Lauvers and I went to Rojas and accepted the congregation with the promise that the Lauvers would continue the work for the present, coming from Salto. This they did for some months when suddenly the same superintendent informed me that the Evangelizing Board did not look with favor on what was done. He had asked a price for the little chapel erected in 1926, which we thought was too high, and we made him a counter proposal. It was then that we were told that they would take the work in Rojas again. We had invested no money as yet and decided that if the Methodist Board was not satisfied with our offer, it would be better for them to take charge of Rojas again. The Lauvers are now concentrating their efforts on the work in Salto and Arrecifes, making occasional visits to Sarmiento and Carmen de Areco.

This new undeveloped district within 100 to 150 miles of the city of Buenos Aires stands out as a challenge to the Mennonite Church and is an open door. More workers are needed to man this section of the country. It looks like a promising new field. There was no membership in Salto in January 1942, as the work had just been begun.

# A CALL TO ARGENTINA

By T. K. Hershey

There are souls to be saved in Argentina,
And they through the Church must be sought,
God's love to them is extended,
For they through His blood have been bought.

Chorus:
Oh go, go, go, go,
Go to the lost in Argentina,
Oh, go to the souls that are there.
Nothing is so dear to our Saviour,
As the Gospel proclaimed everywhere.

Long ago Jesus said, "Preach the Gospel"
To all that shall live here below;
And if you and I are obedient,
To the land of the South it will go.

Are you burdened for souls, O my brothers,
And your own obligations as well?
Concerning your duty to others,
Have you asked God to show you His will?

The call that has come from Argentina
For the Bible so precious, so dear,
Should challenge the church of the Northland
For salvation, the Gospel of cheer.

If you cannot go, Christian worker,
Then pray that others might heed;
This may mean of you time and money,
But God will supply all your need.

Note: These words were written by Brother Hershey while he was traveling on a train through the hot plains of Arizona in 1925. As he was meditating upon the needs of the South American Mission field, he felt inspired to write. The words and tune of the hymn, "The Church in the Wildwood," impressed him and led him to compose the poem, "A Call to Argentina." Although he had never written poetry in his life, he felt inspired of the Lord to write the sentiments here expressed. The words may be sung to the tune of "The Church in the Wildwood."

CHAPTER IV

# OUR ARGENTINE CHURCHES

## BY T. K. HERSHEY AND E. V. SNYDER

As was seen in Chapter III, "The Great Task Begun," there are at the present writing (1942) thirty-three preaching centers, the majority of these having organized Mennonite churches. Some have a few or no members as yet; others have from three to seventy members.

### Distinct Characteristics and Problems

One of the outstanding characteristics of the membership in the Argentine Mennonite Church is the conglomeration of nationalities. From this mixture of nations come those who are now one in Christ and members of the Mennonite Church. In all our churches, one may find representatives of different nationalities; in some as many as ten different nationalities may be found.

On one occasion eight converts were to be baptized, and we discovered on examining them that there were as many nationalities represented as there were candidates for baptism. They were asked whether they could imagine anything that could weld together representatives of different nations in one body as the love of God can and does. The answer was, *No*. The Italian convert looking toward a Spaniard in the class, said, "And it was not very long ago that both that man and I were thrown in jail for fighting; now we are about to kneel together and be received as one in Christ."

It is marvellous what the love of God can do in amalgamating persons of different nationalities together until they become brethren in Christ. This mixture of races and nationalities, however, has caused trouble in our churches, especially when it comes to the question of intermarriage. After all each one believes his nation is superior to the others. The customs of each are different, and each one thinks his is the proper and correct one and is satisfied with it.

Hospitality and courtesy are two distinctive characteristics of the Argentine people, rich and poor alike. They are not "forgetful to entertain strangers," for there is always room for the visitor. One more "name in the dinner pot," or one more plate at the table, does not augment the usual expenses very materially. It is a heart of stone and not the heart of a Christian that will turn a needy one away from his door. When one enters a home, he must shake hands with all, from the oldest to the youngest, every child as well as the grown ones, and the same mark of courtesy is shown on leaving. If it happens that one is ready to leave and does not see all present, he should wait until they are called or leave a "Good-by" for the absent ones. If a friend makes a call or a visit, and one asks, "How is your wife?" the answer is, "Very well, thank you. She sends greetings." "Yes Sir," "Yes Madam," and "Yes Miss" are used invariably if one wants to be courteous and polite. Politeness also requires one to say "Good Morning," "Good Afternoon," "Good Evening," and "Good Night" even though the same person is met in these four parts of the same day. The smallest child is taught these customs.

Seven different nationalities are represented here, all members of the Argentine Mennonite Mission. The nationalities are Arabic, German, Lithuanian, native Argentine, North American, Spanish, and Italian

Contentment is another Christian characteristic that becomes all followers of the meek and lowly One. It is just the opposite of the sin of covetousness. To be content and to make the best of circumstances are not difficult for the majority of our Argentine brethren.

Sympathy for anyone in sorrow, bereavement, or sickness is manifested by many visits and words of consolation from friends and acquaintances. When a call comes to assist in such times as these, everything is left at once so as to fulfill their mission as a friend. It is not considered a cross or a task, but one of the prime duties of friendship. An expression that is commonly used is, *"Si Dios quiere,"* (If God be willing). If God wills a thing to be so, what is man to oppose it?

Hospitality, courtesy, contentment, and sympathy are all Christian characteristics and in accordance with the Scriptures and should be salient. But it is "the little foxes that spoil the vines," such as untruth, deception, anger, backbiting, and malice. These do not matter so much, they seem to think, as long as they are not found out. The first one mentioned is very difficult to overcome because its father, Satan, is always lurking near by. However when individuals are really born again, they can get victory over these things and find it is possible to live a truthful and victorious life in Christ.

## CONVERTS

Converts are secured through personal evangelism, tent campaigns, and special evangelistic meetings and through the direct influence of the changed lives of their relatives or friends. Invitations are frequently extended to the unconverted to accept Christ in ordinary preaching services or in our Sunday schools. There is no definite, fixed rule to secure converts. Often conviction of sin is brought on through sickness, the death of a friend, accidents, or by the still small voice that continues to call.

Usually the people in this country are completely ignorant of the first principles of following Christ. They have not inherited the long years of Biblical training. They perhaps had never heard a sermon before, and they do not know what it means to be a self-denying Christian. They are altogether ignorant of

church history. They have nothing yet upon which to build, and for years have been told that the Protestants are a corrupt sect who teach against God, Christ, the Virgin Mary, the saints, the angels, and the Holy Catholic Church, and that the Protestants have a false Bible. They have heard so much against us that a wall of hatred and preconceived notions and ideas must first be destroyed before effective contact can be made. This is done by carefully explaining who we are, what we believe, and why we believe what we do. We base our reasons on the Bible, which we must beforehand get folks to see is not false. When once this is accomplished and when the individual is convinced that we are God's chosen ones sent here to preach His Holy Word, then we proceed.

First, we must show that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"; that man's relation to God is caused by sin; that he is undone and in a lost condition before God; and that there is a remedy for sin. Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour, is held up before him to the extent that His holiness brings remorse, conviction, repentance, and conversion. We teach that, on being born anew, one must discontinue all sinful habits and be separated from all appearance of evil. When this is all accomplished, we have a convert and are ready to prepare him for entrance into the church.

A series of twenty lessons prepared for converts is then studied. The first lesson is on "God"; the second, "Jesus Christ"; the third, the "Holy Spirit"; then, on the "Bible," "Christian Religion," and so on to the doctrines of the Bible as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. After these twenty lessons have been studied, the *Manual of Confession of Faith,* giving the eighteen Articles of Faith of the Mennonite Church, is then studied. This is a translation of *The Confession of Faith and Minister's Manual* used in our churches at home. Emphasis is here given upon what we practice and preach. A questionnaire that has been prepared for converts is given to the candidate for his study and meditation and signature. Then if the pastor is thoroughly convinced that the individual has shown signs of being born again and that old things have passed away, the questionnaire is filled out and the candidate is received into the church by water baptism.

All this takes several months. For the reasons shown, converts in this country cannot be received immediately upon making a public confession of sin. Our experience has been that too often some have been received without evidence that they fully understand and have experienced the new life. The result is that "headaches" follow.

When the convert proves by his life that he is born again, a new creature in Christ, and brings forth fruit worthy of repentance, he is baptized and received as a member of the body of Christ, and he becomes a brother, or sister, in the Mennonite Church in the town where he is baptized. Emphasis is then placed on being active. Three things are told the new member that he must do to develop and grow: *study God's Word, pray,* and *work*. These three things result in consecration to God and contact with man. If the member is active, there is little danger of backsliding.

### WHY NOT MORE MEMBERS?

One of the questions frequently asked the returned missionary is, Why are there not more members? During the first years the membership increased rapidly in numbers; then there came a lull, a standstill, a decrease of members, and the question is, *Why?* Following are a few of the reasons.

*Work Opened in New Towns.* It should be said here that several missions were opened in the same year. Usually, the work in a new town starts off with enthusiasm and many accept Christ. Then after a period, the work settles down and runs along sometimes without any public confessions for a long time. Thus membership increases for a while; then the membership remains the same for a longer period. This explains in part why there were many members in the beginning.

*Persecution.* Only those who understand Catholicism know how individuals from Catholic homes must suffer persecution. The result very often is that the individual cannot stand up under the ordeal, and he gives up in despair. Derision, scorning, and almost the caste system is used on the individual child of God. He may be boycotted, if in business, ousted from society, and even mistreated in hospitals and other social gatherings. He is an outcast in the eyes of his loyal Catholic friends. This treatment causes us to lose some members.

*Lack of a Definite Experience.* In spite of our trying to do thorough teaching, we do get members that do not have a definite experience. These cannot stand up under the persecution that they should endure, and they slide back. They do not remember that they who would live a godly life must suffer persecution.

*Backsliding.* This has been hinted at as one result of persecution. For very simple reasons some give up and turn back. It may be because one member has a misunderstanding with another member in the church, becomes offended, and quits coming to the meetings. Satan takes advantage of this shallow soil and holds before the weak member the pleasures of the world which perhaps he had not fully renounced. He still cherishes the "garlic and onions of Egypt," and he cannot altogether forget the "fleshpots" of the world. He has not learned that faith is the victory that overcomes the world; so he gradually slides back into the world, and being encouraged by his friends, he gives up and is lost to the church.

*Divisions.* Two congregations had the misfortune of losing a number of members through envy and strife and these pulled off to form a group of their own. Tired of being isolated, they called on other denominations to help them out of their predicament. The dissenting group in America joined the Pentecostals and the one in Trenque Lauquen called on the Baptists to organize them into a church. The loss in the two congregations was close to 100 members.

*Moving to Other Districts.* Through moving to Buenos Aires and other towns where there was no Mennonite Church, many members have been lost. Some united with other denominations when an opportunity was offered, while others lost out spiritually and were swallowed up by the enticing allurements of the big city. Young people who removed from parental restrictions often lost their equilibrium and yielded to the fascinating evils of the city and were lost to the Church.

*Deaths.* Many of our dear brethren and sisters who were faithful until death have been called to the Home Beyond. In their last hours they gave evidence that they were passing over "to be with Christ; which is far better." Hundreds of names have been taken off the church record for this reason.

The above are some of the many reasons why the Argentine Mennonite Mission does not have more members. The present membership, January 1942, is 536.

## PRACTICE

Doubtless it would be well in a write-up on the church to give something in reference to its practices. One of the things very noticeable to a newcomer is the inbred customs of the Catholic Church. On entering the Catholic Church, its members, especially women, may be seen to kneel, kiss their thumbs, make crosses on their chest, and kneel again on taking a seat. Since these customs have been followed for generations, such a deep impression is made that it takes years for some to make a clean sweep of their images and Catholic customs. It is very often hard for some to understand why we do not have images of the Virgin Mary or some statue of Christ in our churches.

Yet there are those who understand quickly, especially when they read the Bible and attend our services. They observe that our church practices are different and correspond with what we believe and teach. Our North American brethren would feel at home in any of our church services. They are generally opened with the singing of hymns, Scripture reading, and prayer. Very often an opportunity is given for citing Scripture texts by memory and for testimonies, interspersed at times with choruses. After the sermon, an offering is lifted, another hymn is sung, and the benediction is pronounced.

Our people are of a worshipful spirit. Although ignorant of Christ's definition that true worship is "in spirit and in truth," they manifest a spirit of reverence, a good custom brought over from the Catholic Church. Our members here might make some of our brethren and sisters at home observe what it means to have reverence in God's house. One finds at times that indifference is the cause of irreverence. In all our services, preaching, Sunday school, Young People's Meetings, and kindred meetings, a sacredness for God's house is manifested by the really converted Argentine that is striking and worthy of imitation.

Our brethren are simple in their dress, as well as the sisters, who wear the veil in time of prayer and worship. First Corinthians 11:1-16 is not difficult to teach. In fact when one has a

plain "thus saith the Lord," our brethren and sisters readily accept the doctrine and teaching. Customs without "thus saith the Lord" are difficult to teach.

Our communion services are well attended and are held in a solemn and reverent way. They are conducted as the Mother Church in North America celebrates this sacred service. Feet washing for our people is a plain "thus saith the Lord" and is practiced cheerfully. At the close of this service, an opportunity is given for each one to express himself in a testimony. These testimonies are inspiring and very interesting. In the testimonies the members refer to the blessing of partaking of the sacred emblems and of the service of feet washing. When they tell what this special service means to them, often their testimonies bring tears of rejoicing. Some of these inspiring services and testimony meetings are related in Pastors' Meetings as an exchange of experiences.

## CHURCH OFFERINGS

The subject of giving was not stressed in the first years of mission work due to the fact that the missionaries were foreigners and Catholic propaganda* was against us. As the work developed, we began to teach the blessings of giving. At first we placed offering boxes in a convenient place where the offering for the Lord's work was deposited. Later on the monthly envelope system was adopted. This system greatly increased our contributions. Still later we decided to use weekly envelopes. On these were designated the purpose for which the money was to be used—Orphanage, Printery, or for local expenses. Finally it was decided to let each church decide the use of the money raised.

After the weekly system was adopted, the offerings increased in some places as much as 400 per cent. Now we have those who count it a joy to give and who tithe their income. The envelopes are lifted when the offering basket is passed. In looking over the offering statistics of our Argentine churches, we found that with the exception of a few years there has been a steady increase in raising funds by the members themselves for the

*The word "propaganda" as used in this book is always used in the sense of "announcing" or "making public" any sort of news.

Lord's work. The following report in pesos for the years 1919 to the beginning of 1942 should be of interest:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1919 | 11.45 | 1931 | 5,490.30 |
| 1920 | 54.60 | 1932 | 4,970.35 |
| 1921 | 675.05 | 1933 | 5,854.20 |
| 1922 | 1,796.90 | 1934 | 5,956.55 |
| 1923 | 2,413.48 | 1935 | 6,120.20 |
| 1924 | 2,384.67 | 1936 | 4,801.95 |
| 1925 | 2,035.33 | 1937 | 4,221.50 |
| 1926 | 3,383.00 | 1938 | 8,464.20 |
| 1927 | 4,271.75 | 1939 | 8,382.70 |
| 1928 | 4,466.48 | 1940 | 8,327.42 |
| 1929 | 4,480.00 | 1941 | 8,819.68 |
| 1930 | 4,693.20 | Total (pesos) | 102,074.96 |

This money, which in United States currency would amount to approximately $35,000, has been used for relief work, buildings, rents, municipal taxes, and local church expenses.

## PASTORS' MEETING

In order to better understand each other and help solve our common problems, we hold a Pastors' Meeting at least twice a year, one at the time of the Annual Conference and another usually in July. Its members are all ordained ministers, from which a president or chairman, a secretary, and a treasurer are elected. All workers not ordained are invited to sit in and listen during the meeting at the time of the annual conference, but they do not vote.

This body has authority to appoint committees or members of committees not otherwise provided for, such as committees for Spanish literature, Bible Coach and Tent, Bible School, Children's Home, Workers' Institute, Young People's Retreat, Young People's Meeting Topics, and so on.

In looking over the minutes of the Pastors' Meeting during the past years, one finds that many and varied were the topics discussed. Questions largely of a national and religious nature, such as "The Qualifications of Workers," "The Spiritual Relation of the Minister to His Congregation," and so on, were topics thoroughly discussed sometimes in an animated but broth-

erly way. This body has always been looked upon as the governing one of the church conference.

### THE CHURCH CONFERENCE

The first Argentine Mennonite Church Conference was held in Trenque Lauquen, February 12, 13, 1923. The general topics were: "The Church," "The Sunday School," and "The Young People's Meeting." It was a very spirited conference, and we were all like one big family sitting around a table to discuss family affairs. By way of comparison, the following statistics are given to compare it with that of the last Conference held in Pehuajó in 1942:

*Churches and Membership*

| First Conference (Year 1923) | | Last Conference (Year 1942) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of churches | 4 | | 25 |
| Number of members, Jan. 1922 | 44 | January 1941 | 484 |
| Number baptized during year | 46 | | 73 |
| Number received by letter | 1 | | 15 |
| Number restored | 0 | | 21 |
| Total | 91 | | 593 |
| Number lost by death | 1 | | 12 |
| Number lost by letter | 0 | | 19 |
| Number lost by leaving | 0 | (Left the church) | 30 |
| Total lost | 1 | | 61 |
| Total no. members, Jan. 1923, | 90 | January 1942, | 532 |

*Church Offerings*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1922 | 1,042.95 pesos | 1941 | 7,062.90 pesos |

*Sunday Schools*

| (Year 1922) | | (Year 1941) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Sunday schools | 7 | | 30 |
| Average per Sunday | 357 | | 778 |
| Offerings for year: pesos | 510.75 | pesos | 1,756.75 |

*Bible Readers*

At the first conference, the following report was given with respect to our native Bible readers' work: There were seven readers, who made 4,549 visits on an average of 163 visits per week during the year 1922. Many converts and several baptisms were some of the visible results of this kind of work. There were two kindergartens in 1922 with 173 children enrolled.

*Distribution of Literature*

| (Year 1922) | | (Year 1941) |
|---|---|---|
| Bibles | 80 | 260 |
| New Testaments | 382 | 515 |
| Gospels and tracts | 99,594 | 336,671 |

In the first conference (1923) report, a paragraph states: "For the advancement of the work of evangelization in this part of Argentina, these four congregations with their forty-four members contributed during the year 1922 the following: churches, 1,042.95 pesos; Sunday schools, 510.75 pesos; Young People's Meeting, 243.20 pesos; a total of 1,796.90 pesos."

*Recommendations*

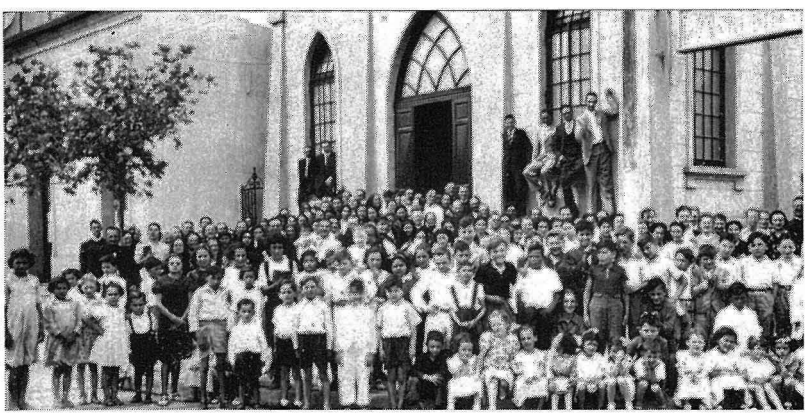
A few of the recommendations that were given at this first Argentine Mennonite Conference might be of interest:

"1. That all our pastors (then five) redouble their efforts to preach the Gospel in season and out of season, preaching the whole will and counsel of God, until it can be said that every one of our members are living a faithful, consecrated life.

"2. That our goal for 1923 be the conversion and entrance into our churches of ninety more persons. [The records show that there were only fifty-seven more.]

"3. That our pastors and lay members make every effort in the responsibility of evangelizing our district and raising up and preparing workers worthy of the vocation, in order to extend the influence of the Gospel with more rapidity.

"4. That our members be taught that contributing systematically for the advancement of the Lord's work brings blessings to every believer.



TOP: First Annual Conference, 1922
SECOND: Annual Conference. 1928
THIRD: Annual Conference, 1939

"5. That each pastor be concerned about the discipline of his church in order that it may be found pure and ready to be presented to the Lord, and that united efforts be made for the development of the work to the glory of God."

It will be seen at once that the burden of the first church conference was the salvation of souls and the extension of the work in our district.

There were four missionary families—Shanks, Hersheys, Lantzes, and Lauvers, and two national workers, Albano Luayza and wife—at that time (1923), making eight missionaries and two national workers against twenty-eight missionaries and fifteen national workers in 1942.

The 1942 conference held in Pehuajó was the eighteenth annual conference and one of the best. All our conferences are conducted along the line of those at home. Programs are printed and sent out weeks before, giving ample time to prepare the addresses. The constitution of the conference defines its purpose, duty of members, officials, and its committees. A nominating committee is selected by the pastors in session, and from its prepared slate the officers and committees are elected in open conference. There is a session for business and reports of secretary, treasurer, and committees are given. There is time for open discussion. At the final session, the resolutions committee reads its recommendations.

## GENERAL CONFERENCE

Our work covers a very large district from Buenos Aires to Santa Rosa (360 miles east to west), from Tres Lomas 150 miles north to General Villegas, and farther north to the growing work in the Cosquín district. With the twenty-five or more established churches in the district, the traveling expenses became too heavy to continue to bring all the workers (men and women) and delegates from all these churches to one central place. A congregation having twenty or more members is entitled to two lay delegates.

After considering the wisdom of spending so much money annually for railroad fares, it was decided in the 1942 conference to hold the conference every two years. It will be known as the General Conference. Then each year, regional confer-

ences will be held in the different districts. One such regional one-day Sunday-school conference was held July 9, 1942, in Trenque Lauquen with representatives from Pehuajó, America, Tres Lomas, Santa Rosa, Villegas, Ameghino, Passo, and 30 de Agosto congregations. It was a profitable meeting. The General Conference will convene in 1944 if the Lord wills and tarries.

## ORDINATIONS

### *Bishop Ordained*

Since I was the only bishop, the Mission Council, at my request, consented to ordain another bishop. It was decided that any missionary brother, whether on furlough or on the field, is eligible as candidate. The following procedure was unanimously adopted: Any minister having four or more votes would be eligible as a candidate. Should there be more than one receiving more than four or more votes, the highest two should be candidates for the lot.

A season of prayer was engaged in; then we read and commented on several Scripture passages such as Titus 1:5-9; I Timothy 3:1-7; II Timothy 2:2; 3:2-8; then further prayer was offered after which all present voted. The first ballot resulted in only one brother receiving more than four votes, Brother Swartzentruber. I was then authorized to write to the Mission Board to ask permission to ordain Brother Swartzentruber as bishop.

The Mission Board granted permission, and Brother Swartzentruber was ordained bishop on July 16, 1934. Since the mid-year Pastors' Meeting met then also, it was a very appropriate time for his ordination.

### *Ministers Ordained*

ALBANO LUAYZA had been preaching the Gospel for fourteen years before we became acquainted with him. In 1920, when Brethren Yoder and Musselman were here, Brother Luayza made application to unite with us because he observed that we were teaching the ordinances of prayer head covering and feet washing, and the doctrine of nonconformity to the

world. The simple life appealed to him. Brother Yoder and myself went to 9 de Julio where Brother Luayza lived to have an interview with him. On their return to the United States, S. C. Yoder and S. H. Musselman presented the matter to the Mission Board. Permission was granted to accept him as a worker. He was then examined as a candidate for entrance into our mission. He had to answer the same questionnaire, but in Spanish, that all prospective foreign missionaries must answer before being accepted.

Brother Luayza and Brother Lantz were ordained to the ministry at the second annual church conference held in Pehuajó, February 23, 24, 1924. J. L. Rutt was ordained at the time of our Mission Council in 1926.

PABLO (PAUL) CAVADORE is a brother of Carlos, Angela, Anita, María, and Santina Cavadore, five of the first class to be baptized in Argentina. He had wandered into sin. He once said he could not finish a meal or sleep a whole night without smoking a cigarette. This kind of life began to tell on his health. His converted brother and sisters believed that if he were brought home from the place in the country where he was working as a laborer, he would become converted. After much prayer, he came home to Pehuajó. He was persuaded to attend church and was converted on hearing the first sermon. Six months later he was baptized.

From the beginning, we saw undeveloped talent in Brother Cavadore. He began studying the Bible and read many books in the church library. He was ready to distribute tracts and do personal work. Because of his interest in the work, he was appointed "field man." His work was to visit towns in our district unreached by the missionaries.

To help us spread the Good News in this way, the railroad company granted a pass to Brother Cavadore. Thus he traveled from Bragado to Santa Rosa, visiting and distributing tracts in all the towns. He was out every day somewhere making contacts with people. He later enrolled as a student in our Bible School in which he did good work and from which he was graduated in 1929. On February 26, 1927, Brother Cavadore married Sister Marcelina Michelli, a Sunday-school teacher and Bible reader of the Pehuajó congregation.

At the annual conference in 1931 in Carlos Casáres, Brother Cavadore and wife were appointed for the Lord's work, and he was ordained to the ministry at this time, February 1, 1931. From that date to this, he has been in charge of congregations and has held evangelistic meetings in practically all our churches. He does very good work in tent campaigns.

SANTIAGO (JAMES) BATTAGLIA lived most of his life in Trenque Lauquen. He was graduated from our Bible School in the same class as Brother Cavadore. He was our helper in Trenque Lauquen three years and was ordained to the ministry May 23, 1933. He was in charge of the Trenque Lauquen congregation for seven years. On February 2, 1940, he withdrew from our mission, taking a large number of the Trenque Lauquen membership with him. He organized an independent group and rented a hall one block away from the Trenque Lauquen Church. On May 21, 1942, after having visited Santiago's congregation three times, the Baptists from Buenos Aires rebaptized Santiago, his wife, and thirteen former members. On July 12, 1942, they re-ordained or consecrated Santiago, who now is pastor of the Baptist congregation. For the Mennonites, he was a failure, for which all of us have felt very sorry.

FELICIANO GORJÓN and CARLOS BARBOSA are two young men, who also graduated from our Bible School. They married members of the Carlos Casáres congregation and have been in charge of congregations for a number of years. At our last Pastors' Meeting, it was decided to ordain these two brethren in Carlos Casáres in October 1942.

There are other young men, students in our Bible School, who are carrying the Gospel message somewhere every Sunday, and who we hope, will in the course of time be called to the ministry. While being ordained gives a worker a certain prestige, we have not been quick to ordain. We believe that one should be sure that God has called him to preach the Gospel, that Biblical requirements are found in him, and that his life is conformed to the high standards of Christian living and Christian devotion. In spite of all this care, it is possible to ordain a "Diotrephes," who "loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, . . . prating against us with malicious words . . . casteth them out of the church." We have seen at least one

"Diotrephes" amongst us, and we hope by exercising greater care that we will not ordain another one. Ordaining men to the ministry suggests places of worship, rented halls, and church houses. We shall therefore consider what has been done along this line.

## PROPERTIES AND CHURCH BUILDINGS

The purchasing of properties and the erecting of church buildings became necessary if our work was to take on the appearance of permanency. A hall used for years as a barroom, poolroom, bakery, or grocery is not suitable as a permanent place for the worship of God. Those who attend recall former experiences, and the following expressions have been heard, "Ah, this is the hall where Mr. So-and-so had his bar and poolroom. Here is where he kept his wine and beer, and over there he had the billiard tables." Or, "This is where I used to get my groceries and bread." Often it is difficult for people to have reverence in a place of this kind.

The putting up of buildings convinced people that we were here to stay. Much false propaganda had been made that the Protestants do not remain long in a town; that they rent but do not pay the rent and leave without paying their debts to grocerymen, milkmen, and others; and that those who are deceived by their false doctrines and become adherents of these false religious promoters, will be compelled to pay the bills. Thus it became apparent for these reasons and others that our work would be looked upon as stable and permanent by erecting our own buildings.

Before describing the purchasing of properties and erecting buildings, it might be well to answer some questions often asked the missionary when he is home on furlough.

1. *In your investigation in buying properties, what are some of the essential things to look into?* Because of very little remorse of conscience in telling the untruth on the part of those of the world, one must investigate thoroughly the possibility of securing a clear title. Examining a deed in a foreign country and language is by no means a small matter. A trustworthy justice of the peace, or a lawyer, is carefully selected to attend to the legal end of the investigation.

The location of the lot that is to be bought is essential. Will the site selected continue to be good? Which way will the town extend? Is it in a residential or a business section? What class of people live there—upper, middle, or lower? What are the advantages or disadvantages of the location?

2. *From where is the building material brought?* Much of it comes from United States and European countries. Most of the iron, glass, roofing, and much of the lumber come from other countries. Oregon pine is used very much. Thus the transportation, commissions, custom charges, and fluctuations of the money market make building in Argentina expensive. Since brick and labor are cheap, the cost of building is equalized. Cement was shipped into Argentina until recent years; it is now made here.

3. *How does the fluctuation of the money market affect building?* The constant change in the value of the dollar makes the purchasing of property and building material a problem. One thinks, plans, estimates, and negotiates in Argentine pesos; then he calculates how many dollars of United States currency will be needed to make the deal at the present rate of exchange. But until the amount needed arrives, the United States dollar may have dropped several cents; this means a shortage of several hundred or even thousands of pesos. If the dollar goes up, the difference is placed in our Exchange Fund. This fluctuation affects prices of materials very much.

The exchange has been as low as 2.30 pesos for one United States dollar and as high as five pesos for one United States dollar. Thus $1,000 might bring us anywhere from 2,300 pesos to 5,000 pesos. During the last years the dollar has not fluctuated very much, remaining around 4.20 pesos for one dollar.

4. *Can a good contractor be secured?* Yes; we can and have been fortunate in securing capable men. Once we employed one who was dishonest and through him had to pay twice a part of the cost of a church and dwelling. One of our members in French, a young man, has completed a course in architectural work, contracting, and building. He will be very useful to us in the future when it comes to building.

5. *How is the building work managed?* All building is looked after by a building committee which submits their findings,

plans, and estimates, and other details to the executive or managing committee, the final authority.

6. *In whose name are the properties in Argentina?* They are in the name of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities of United States and Canada, which is incorporated in Argentina. The power of attorney is conferred on one of the missionaries by the Mission Board who acts as the Board's legal representative. He has all the property placed in the name of the Argentine incorporated board which in Spanish is *La Junta Menonita de Misiones y Caridades de la Argentina.* All deeds, incorporation papers, and valuable documents are kept in a fireproof safe, which at present is in Trenque Lauquen.

7. *Do you have to pay taxes on mission property?* The Argentine law says, "All churches are exempt from taxation." When that law was made, there were very few, if any, Protestant churches in Argentina. It naturally meant Catholic church buildings. But since the law did not say "Catholic church buildings," the justice of the peace in working to get our properties exempt made no distinction. Consequently, we are exempt from all territorial taxes on our properties. This exemption means a saving of thousands of pesos to our mission. However, we are not exempt from municipal taxes.

We shall now proceed to describe in order the properties purchased for the Board, the amount paid, and the building built, or what was already built when the property was bought. Unless otherwise stated, all figures will be in Argentine pesos. To find the approximate value in dollars in United States currency, divide by three.

PEHUAJÓ. When Brethren Yoder and Musselman were visiting Argentina, steps were taken officially to purchase a lot, or property, for the mission. After the present property at Pehuajó was selected as a suitable one, Brother Yoder cabled the Mission Board asking for $8,000 in United States currency. This amount was forwarded at once and brought 18,517 pesos.

Not being incorporated yet, no property could be bought in the name of the Mission Board. In order to safeguard the Board, the property was bought and placed in Brother Musselman's name to be held in trust for the Board. This was done in

1920, and two years later (1922), incorporation papers were secured and the property was transferred by myself as the power of attorney from Brother Musselman's name to that of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities.

This property is one square west of the main street, rather centrally located, a corner lot of 135 feet by 165 feet. It had on it a house and two tin shops. The price paid was 11,500 pesos plus 350 pesos for the deed. After the old buildings were overhauled, the house served as a dwelling and the tin shops as a place of worship. The house was remodelled several times and is still being used by the resident pastor and family.

In 1923 a church building 51 feet by 19 feet was erected at a total cost of 25,349.62 pesos; the value of material donated by a big building firm and the railway company was 2,578.47 pesos of this amount. The donation consisted of lumber, galvanized roofing, thirty-five barrels cement, angle irons for windows and doors, and railroad irons for floor beams. The Pehuajó Church is the only one that has a basement. The itemized account of this our first Mennonite Church in Argentina can be found in the December 6, 1923, issue of the *Gospel Herald,* page 743. The congregation in Pehuajó although not large, contributed 530.65 pesos toward its church house. The building was dedicated August 26, 1923. Juan C. Varetto of a neighbor mission preached the dedicatory sermon to an audience of more than five hundred people. The halls have since been remodelled several times to accommodate the Printery, Orphanage, Bible School, and day school, and at present is rearranged for the clinic.

In 1930, a small house, with five rooms and a bath, was built on the south side of the lot at a cost of 7,500 pesos. While the Bible School was in Pehuajó one of the instructors lived in it. Since the Bible School was transferred to Bragado, this house has been rented.

TRENQUE LAUQUEN. For sometime the rent in Trenque Lauquen was 200 pesos a month. This sum seemed too much to continue paying; so investigations were made for a suitable property for the mission.

On March 12, 1923, the present property was purchased, consisting of a lot 80 feet by 165 feet with a new five-room

house, bathroom, and storage rooms, and an old building previously used as a bakery, which was converted into a hall for services. The garage was remodelled into suitable quarters for the Mission Printery. The sum of 30,000 pesos was paid for this property.

The old hall did not have a very good appearance for a building only two blocks east of the main street. The city authorities gave us orders to have it fixed up. Since it was really necessary to put up a new building, the congregation, under the direction of Brother Lantz, had started a Building Fund, but there was not yet sufficient money on hand to build. Each time that the city referred to the condition of the hall, the mission pleaded for a little more time to collect funds. This was conceded for several years; at last an order came stating the time allotted for the work to be done.

In 1929 the old hall was fixed up with new windows, doors, plaster, and paint. It was thought at that time that the remodelled building might do for some years, but the Inspector of Public Works thought otherwise. Accordingly, in 1932, a new church building was built on the site of the overhauled bakeshop. Most of the building was torn down and the material was used in the new one; the cost was 7,353.50 pesos. This sum includes the cost of remodelling a room 22 feet by 25 feet at the rear of the church building to be used for kindergarten, Sunday-school class, and Bible study class. The congregation contributed toward the new building, 1,758.20 pesos. The new church building in Trenque Lauquen was dedicated March 27, 1932.

TRES LOMAS. A vacant lot 80 feet by 165 feet, two squares from the main street, was bought for the sum of 1,778 pesos. A house, 35 feet by 40 feet, cottage style, with seven rooms and bath, was built. A church building 20 feet by 55 feet was also erected, making the cost of both the house and church 15,600 pesos. The lot, the buildings, garage, windmill, division walls, and deed made a total expenditure of 20,405.15 pesos.

The lot was purchased June 4, 1926; the Swartzentruber family moved into the house January 3, 1927, and the church was dedicated to the Lord, January 31, 1927.

SANTA ROSA. The mission property in Santa Rosa was bought April 1926. It is quite centrally located, more so now than when it was bought. The lot 50 feet by 135 feet had on it a seven-room house and bath, with the corner room large enough for a hall for meetings. The first cost was 16,000 pesos.

Considerable remodelling, replastering, and painting had to be done, and a larger kitchen was built. The Luayza family moved into their new home August 1926. Later a church 20 feet by 55 feet was built and dedicated May 25, 1927. The entire cost of the Santa Rosa property was 25,338.20 pesos.

CARLOS CASÁRES. A vacant lot 135 feet by 165 feet was purchased for 5,000 pesos. Since the lot was larger than necessary, we sold three lots, leaving the corner lot, 100 feet by 100 feet, for the mission. On this lot a house and church were erected, more or less the same size and style as the buildings in Tres Lomas.

The contractor was the same one who had built for us in Tres Lomas and Santa Rosa. But in Carlos Casáres he turned out bad and swindled his creditors out of much money. We paid him according to the contract. He, however, bought building material, groceries, and other supplies for his men from the local merchants, but before he had quite finished everything, he left and has not been seen in these parts since. He owed money in Tres Lomas where he lived, and thousands of pesos in Carlos Casáres. These merchants wanted their money and demanded that we pay his bills. We explained that we did not owe him anything and that we paid him according to contract. They claimed that their lumber, hardware, and other materials were in our buildings and threatened to set bombs under the church house if we did not pay them. We consulted a lawyer, who said that legally we would not be obliged to pay, but if we did not, they might carry out their threats. Then, too, we were under a moral obligation, as we were expecting to do missionary work in Carlos Casáres, perhaps among these very people.

On February 10, 1928, we gave each a note for six months, and hastened to inform the Mission Board in United States of our difficulty. The Board came to our rescue, and by the time the notes were due, they were paid; some creditors discounted 10 per cent on them. The extra that we had to pay was 3,852.40

pesos. The entire amount which we paid for lot, buildings, garage, walls, and materials, after deducting the sale of the three lots and adding the amount paid twice, was 32,000 pesos. The lot was bought September 18, 1926; the Lauver family moved into their new home, May 5, 1927; the church was dedicated July 24, 1927.

BRAGADO. The property in Bragado, located two squares from the main street, was to be purchased in April 1931. The price was 7,000 pesos. The cost of the deed and some needed repairs made a total of about 8,000 pesos. We all believed that the property was a bargain; so we decided to close the deal. When we were about to do this, a cable was received in reply to ours from the Board and read: "Property in Bragado; proposal not sanctioned. The state of affairs will not warrant it this year." We hastened to arrange to hold the property in some way. Several friends of the mission agreed to become "shareholders." The property was purchased and the deed made out to the Board. Later the Board sent the money needed and the shares were paid off.

A large hall served as a meeting place for several years. After the Bible School was moved to Bragado, some changes were made to accommodate it, and a church, 23 feet by 55 feet, was built to the dwelling house. A hall, 13 feet by 21 feet, an extension of the church building, is used for the Bible School. It was dedicated April 10, 1936.

MECHITA. On September 19, 1931, a lot 30 feet by 90 feet was bought for 350 pesos, on which a small church was built. The president of the Western Railroad made a personal donation of 500 pesos toward the building of the church. It will be remembered that Mechita is a town of many railroad employees, the railroad shops being located there. The church was dedicated May 25, 1932. Albano Luayza preached the dedicatory sermon.

A few years later, two Sunday-school classrooms were added to the church. The funds were contributed by local members. It should be said also that the Argentine Evangelization Board contributed a donation to the building of the church.

QUIROGA. In 1936, a lot 75 feet by 150 feet was bought and a church house built to the dwelling house which was on it. The

entire cost of building, repairing, and so on was 7,135.50 pesos. It was dedicated May 16, 1937.

AMERICA. A building that had previously been used for a public school was rented for several years for the mission in America. In 1935 this property was purchased for 6,000 pesos. The lot measured 130 feet by 130 feet. It had a five-room house and a large hall. Considerable remodelling and changes were necessary, such as installing a bathroom and more windows and doors. The hall remains the same and is still used for services. We hope that some day a church building will take its place. The entire cost was 11,391.95 pesos.

PELLEGRINI. On November 3, 1938, a lot 70 feet by 70 feet, with a large house, was secured at this place. The whole building had to be remodelled to make it suitable for a church house. Besides the church, there are two rooms and a small kitchen. The entire cost was 3,342.40 pesos. It was dedicated July 1940.

LONQUIMAY. At this place an auto repair shop on a lot 50 feet by 100 feet was bought by the mission on September 18, 1939. After remodelling it for church services, the entire cost was 3,250 pesos. It has an extra room at the rear used to accommodate the minister who makes weekly visits for the meetings, coming from Santa Rosa or Pellegrini. It was dedicated on May 30, 1940.

VILLA SANTILLAN. This is a suburb of Santa Rosa, a little town in itself. A lot 85 feet by 165 feet was bought and a small church was built. The entire cost amounted to 4,340 pesos. The church was dedicated May 25, 1940.

FRENCH. On December 20, 1939, a lot 200 feet by 100 feet was bought. There was a large garage and machine shop on it, for which we paid 2,000 pesos. Two small lots were sold off. The big building was partly torn down, and a church building was erected, using most of the material.

After these transactions, the remaining lot, 100 feet by 150 feet, and the new building cost 4,704.55 pesos. When the church was ready to be dedicated, S. C. Yoder was asked to preach the dedicatory sermon in July 1940, but the weather did not permit that privilege. It began to rain and kept on raining until there were floods. The date was then set for August 2,

but since Brother Yoder could not postpone his trip to Paraguay, he had to miss the dedicatory program.

COSQUÍN. In 1939 the mission bought two vacant lots making one lot of 85 feet by 85 feet. In Cosquín, lots cost several times more than in the province of Buenos Aires. These lots with the deed cost 3,540 pesos.

Here we had the good fortune of getting in touch with an evangelical contractor in the city of Córdoba, Sr. Jacinto Canastrari. He built a house and church on the ground purchased that are a credit to the town and especially to our work. The entire cost of lots, deed, pulpit, benches, buildings, and other material was 18,309.95 pesos.

On June 16, 1940, the contractor turned the keys over to Brother Lantz, missionary in Cosquín. On July 9, Argentina's Independence Day, the church was dedicated. S. C. Yoder preached the dedicatory sermon, translated by Brother Litwiller. The brethren from the province of Buenos Aires that attended this special service were J. W. Shank, N. Litwiller, C. L. Holderman, and T. K. Hershey.

The entire estimated value of all properties and equipment in the Argentine Mennonite Mission, January 1, 1942, as reported to the government, is 263,124 pesos.

## DEPARTMENTS OF CHURCH WORK

### *Sunday School*

When mission work was first launched in Argentina, stress was laid on Sunday-school work. On February 23, 1919, the first attempt was made to hold a Sunday school in our home in Pehuajó. A few whom we had learned to know were invited. To our agreeable surprise, eighteen came. This work was pushed forward as rapidly as possible, for the truth was realized, which was later (1922) stated by Querubina Luayza:

"It is really sad to see so many homes where there are many children whose parents are so careless to the extent that it does not worry them if their children are not taught the most insignificant religious ideas. These children grow up knowing nothing but what they see in their everyday life.

"Sometimes we find children in Sunday school who are ignorant of the existence of God. The parents think nothing of the needs of their own souls, nor those of their children. When we have this condition before us, it is then that we appreciate the value of the Sunday school among children."

With Sister Luayza, we, too, believe that the future church depends on the work of the Sunday school. In those first years in Pehuajó, the attendance ran up to 250 and more on special occasions. Our Sunday schools have settled down to an average of 50 or 100. There are several reasons for this. One is that the teen-age boy gets interested in football and justifies himself that he went to Sunday school when a boy and does not need to go now. Just recently a young man in the Ford Agency said to one of the missionaries, "Don't you know me? I used to go to Sunday school when a boy."

"And why don't you come now?" he was asked.

"Oh, well, that was when I was a child."

Some have the notion that the Sunday-school course is finished like the day school, and when you are grown, it is not necessary to go any longer.

One of the encouraging features of our first Sunday schools was that we had native help from the beginning, which was a direct answer to prayer.

The first Sunday-school attendance in Trenque Lauquen was fourteen, but it soon began to grow. Branch Sunday schools were opened and interest and attendance grew until it passed the 200 mark. Sunday-school work was taking root and its influence was being felt.

In the beginning there have been times that the missionary has to be superintendent, chorister, teacher, secretary, and treasurer. Gradually, as some become converted and are indoctrinated, they are a help in these capacities. As the work advanced, there were more schools and an increase in attendance, as the following statistics show:

| | 1919 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of schools | 1 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Average attendance | 60 | 146 | 216 | 357 | 455 |
| Offering (pesos) | 11.45 | 54.60 | 211.50 | 510.75 | 718.08 |

| | 1924 | 1925 | 1930 | 1935 | 1941 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of schools | 9 | 8 | 13 | 26 | 30 |
| Average attendance | 443 | 425 | 715 | 874 | 778 |
| Offering (pesos) | 769.95 | 691.25 | 1,076.65 | 1,035.95 | 1,756.75 |

Thus it may be seen that the Sunday schools up to 1935 were gradually increasing in number and attendance. During the years from 1935 to 1941, the number of schools increased by four, but the attendance dropped by 10 per cent. It is a bit hard to explain this decrease in attendance. However, all our churches are putting forth an effort to revive the Sunday-school work. It will be noted that there has been an increase in giving. The offering in 1919 was 11.45 pesos, while in 1941 it was 1,756.75 pesos. In the first year of Sunday-school work, the average per member was .19 pesos and in the last year it was 2.25 pesos per member.

The older stations have a fine group of young people who are willing to do what they can and are desirous to see the Lord's work prosper, but they need training. Teachers' training classes have been a great help in solving this problem. Our Bible readers always made successful Sunday-school teachers. As soon as teachers can be secured, the Sunday-school pupils are divided into classes: beginners, primary, junior, intermediate, and adult. Sunday-school work is taking on new life and our people are learning to know its worth.

Although every year one or two sections of the annual conference have been dedicated to Sunday-school work, the first regional Sunday-school convention was held in Trenque Lauquen, July 9, 1942. Fourteen Sunday schools were represented and twenty-seven teachers were present. Topics were discussed, such as "The History of Sunday-school Work"; "The Need of Members Attending"; "The Responsibility of the Church to the Child"; "The Need of Giving, How and with a System"; and so on. These awakened a great interest in those present. Folks went home resolved to work harder than ever to inform the others of the importance of the Sunday school.

The Argentine Church is counting much on its Sunday schools for its future members. The first members were found without any Biblical training received in Sunday school, for

there were no Sunday schools. Today it is gratifying to see our young people, members' children, one after the other as they become old enough, being received into the church. Here is an illustration. In one of our congregations, when the parents were converted twenty years ago, they knew nothing of the merits of the Sunday school. They now are parents of fourteen children. One after the other of the children became converted and united with the church. They have all had the advantage of the Sunday school. Eight of the fourteen are members. One, on giving her testimony, said, "I thank God for Christian parents and for the Sunday school. I do not know the things of the world, for I was brought up in the Sunday school and in a home where the Bible was the guide and rule of our life." This young girl is a Sunday-school teacher and has a conviction that she should become a worker in the church. Hundreds of others can say, "We thank God for the Sunday school." We predict that the Sunday school will be the most powerful agent in the development of the Argentine Church.

### *Young People's Meeting*

The first Young People's Meeting was started in Pehuajó as soon as the first class was baptized in October 1919. From that time on, as work was opened in new towns and there were baptisms, the organization of a Young People's Meeting followed where there was a resident worker. For some years each pastor prepared his own programs, but as time went on, the conference appointed a committee of two whose duty it was to prepare topics for all the meetings. Today this is done by soliciting themes from the pastors and workers. Fifty-two of these are selected and distributed among the missionaries and workers, who prepare ten questions on each topic and one or two more for open discussion. These are all sent back to the committee who edits and arranges them in the order desired. They are then sent to the mission Printery to be published in booklet form. Each congregation is then supplied with the amount needed. Hundreds of booklets are printed, many being used by other denominations.

The local congregation elects a committee who makes out a slate for a quarter at a time, naming a leader and a speaker for

each topic of the quarter. The leader gives out the ten questions to as many members who should come to the meeting prepared to read the question with the Bible reference and make some comment on it. The main speaker develops the topic in a general way, after which there is open discussion for all. The first meeting of the month is a consecration meeting in which each member responds to the roll call with a Scripture text. There are as many older people in the Young People's Meeting as young people. It is in fact a members' meeting.

All told, the Young People's Meeting has been a good thing for our churches. It gives our young people a chance to develop their God-given talents and to use their Biblical knowledge received in the Sunday school. The latter is the nursery of the church, while the former is the training school. Our ordained and unordained workers received their first experience in public speaking in the Young People's Meeting. We can truly say that this department is filling a large place in the Argentine Church.

### *Literary Societies*

As the work developed and useful talent was noticed in the church, literary societies were organized. Not all our buildings are equipped with appropriate rooms for these gatherings, which are held in the schoolroom or in adjacent halls. A program committee is elected or appointed by the pastor. The programs consist of singing, learning new songs, Bible questions, poems, readings, biographies, and debates. Not all these features appear on one program.

There are cases where some young people were brought into the church through the literary society. Having been invited by some member, they became interested in the program of the evening, may have heard some religious thought that was new to them, eventually attended other meetings, and finally were caught in the Gospel net.

Sometimes the literary societies give public programs, which prove helpful to those who take part. At other times one society visits another congregation and gives a program. A very fine program was at one time given by the Trenque Lauquen young people on the subject of "Temperance." There were ora-

tions, poems, and readings showing the effects of alcoholic drinking. Those who rendered this special program gave it in Carlos Casáres also. Some who were active in those first literary societies are now workers preaching the Gospel. Pehuajó, Trenque Lauquen, and Bragado have been active in the promotion of the literary society.

At the present writing, the largest and strongest of these is in Bragado. It has the advantage of the support and presence of the Bible School students and is developing commendably.

These societies are guided in part by the pastor in charge. He owes it to his young people to be present at their meetings. This creates closer friendship, which may not be secured in any other way. The literary society has its place, but like all young people's gatherings, it needs a wise mind and steady hand to steer it aright. If properly conducted, it can become a very profitable department in the Argentine Church.

### *Women's Work*

The women's meetings are devotional. A Bible study topic is used with hymns and intercessory prayer for special needs. If unconverted women are expected in the meeting, an evangelistic subject is selected. For some women it is more convenient to go to a meeting in the afternoon than to a church service at night.

In some towns, afternoon meeting is held once a week; in others, twice a month; and still others, once a month. The women do not always meet in the church, but at times meet in private homes and give a special invitation to the neighbor women. This is done with the hope that these neighbor women will become interested and attend the meetings in the church also.

Some sewing has been done in the women's meetings and an organization of that nature is being considered, but a permanent sewing circle has not yet developed in any of our congregations. Very few, if any, of the women are from the well-to-do class. By the time they get their washing, ironing, mending, sewing, and cooking done for their usually good-sized families, there is not much time nor money left.

If an Argentine woman is to be commended and well

thought of by her neighbors and friends, she must be loyal to her family and her home. Home comes first, then other duties if there is any time left. To leave a lunch on the table for the men when they come from work and for the children when they come home from school and then go to an all-day sewing circle meeting would not be commendable in this country. The men are not all Christians, and they think the place for a woman is at home. An answer commonly given to an invitation to meetings is, "Oh, I never go away." That means that she attends to her home duties, and if she should happen to leave the house, it would be in the interest of the family or to take a walk with her husband and children on Sunday afternoon.

The Argentine Christian woman has to overcome some of these difficulties also. If her husband is a Christian, these problems are more easily solved and she has more liberty. Some of these difficulties are mentioned in the women's meeting and prayer is offered in behalf of the unconverted husband. Prayer is also offered for sick members of the family and wayward children, as well as for the different departments of church work.

### *Young People's Retreats*

The first Young People's Retreat was held during Carnival week, March 6-14, 1932, in the Ceilly Woods near Primera Junta, about eight miles east of Trenque Lauquen. The idea grew out of the need for providing something more attractive and spiritually more useful for the young people than to abandon them each year to the nonsensical hilarity of the Carnival as it is held here.

We, Hershey and Snyder, together with a committee of the literary society conceived and planned the camp in a beautiful woods on the Ceilly *estancia*. We took tents and cots for sleeping quarters for the boys and the necessary utensils for camp cooking. The girls were brought out every morning in the Bible Coach and a truck owned by one of the members.

The program called for the following items: "Gold Nuggets from the Psalms"; "Studies in Philippians"; "Helpers"; "The Sunday School, the Church, and Her Young People"; besides Bible games, campfire chats, and Christian recreation.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S RETREAT

TOP: Bragado groups, 1942
SECOND: Playing; a moment of quiet
THIRD: Bringing firewood; transportation
FOURTH: Train leaving Pehuajó; fireside chat

Sister Elvira Armenino wrote in the April 1932 number of the *Voz Menonita,* page 14: "We certainly appreciate this privilege which our pastor has given us. It was an opportunity, not only to go to the country to breathe the fresh, pure air perfumed with the fragrance of the trees and flowers, but also in the refreshing shade lift up our voices, minds, and hearts in the praise of God to whom we owe everything. We discussed many of our various problems and consecrated ourselves to Him." About twenty young people attended this Retreat.

This first local effort bore fruit in the birth of a larger Retreat held January 3-6, 1935, for the young people of all our churches. This was held in a woods about a mile from the Pehuajó Church. The program consisted of Bible study, church history, and studies of social, vocational, and political problems. There were periods of recreation and rest appropriate for that season of the year. Among the outstanding features of this meeting was a contest and exhibition of peace posters, the winner of which had all her Retreat expenses paid as a prize.

Other Retreats in this same place were held in 1940 and 1941 following the same general program. Sometimes at Retreats, outside speakers are invited, but the young people have expressed themselves as favoring the use of our own "home" talent.

The expenses for travel and meals are met from a pooled fund made up of the enrollment fees. This makes the opportunity of attending equal for all, near and far. The average attendance at these meetings has been about seventy young people.

One item on all the pragrams, which would probably look strange in North America, is the requirement that all who attend must bring their own bed covers and sheets. This is necessary because the local members generally do not have room to entertain visitors over night, and the expenses at a hotel would be too great. The beds and mattresses used in the Retreat are the property of the conference. The tents belong to the mission.

In 1942 another local Retreat was held for four days in a beautiful woods about five miles from Bragado for the young people of that church. What characterized this meeting was that it was organized entirely by the young people themselves,

thus assuring that everything would be done according to their own *gusto* (preferences); there were not quite so many courses of study! E. V. Snyder was the guest speaker, giving one course of studies on "What Can We Believe?" and also a series of campfire chats on "What Makes Life Worth Living?" Brother Litwiller, the pastor, of course, with his ever-alert eye was the behind-the-scene director.

In each case we have felt that the Retreats have been especially fruitful in promoting loyalty, enthusiasm, and consecration to Christ and His Church. The probable plan from now on will be to have a general Retreat for all the churches every second year alternating thus with the General Conference. Local Retreats will be held between these alternating years when and where each group decides.

CHAPTER V

# EXTENSION THROUGH EVANGELISM

## BY D. PARKE LANTZ

The keynote of the Argentine Mennonite Mission is evangelism. The church in North America, the members of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, the first missionaries, and those who have been sent since the beginning of the work in South America were filled with the thought of carrying the Gospel to the inhabitants of the Republic of the River Plata (Argentina). The letters and talks of the first missionaries revealed their love for the souls of those who did not have what we call Gospel privileges.

Before the missionaries could speak Spanish fluently enough to preach, they sought for help in other missions by borrowing workers. Among the first of these workers was Sr. Barrio of the Brethren Church, who preached Gospel truths with such fervor and power that in Pehuajó seven were converted and baptized. These newly reborn souls were then taught still more of the will of the Lord and they also began to testify to His goodness and saving grace until some of their families, friends, and neighbors were converted. What a joy it must be to the angels when they see redeemed souls here on the earth going forth with the praises of the Lamb on their lips, with joy in their hearts, and with love for lost souls.

So it was that in Pehuajó the work went ahead being blessed of the Lord. Prayer was being continually made for the many souls in other towns and soon Trenque Lauquen was put on the map as a center of Christian testimony. In the next place opened we quite well remember the words of Albano Luayza when he said, "If we are to take this town for the Lord, it must be done on our knees." God heard that prayer for Santa Rosa and many other prayers which were offered for the salvation of souls in other towns.

In the following pages we will endeavor to bring to you some of the means and methods which the Holy Spirit has used in

evangelizing people in the cities, villages, and farms and in making Christ known to rich and poor, old and young, ignorant and wise, and the sick and well. All of them had sinned and come short of the glory of God, but are now justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

## PREPARATORY WORK

### *Preparation of the Worker Through Prayer*

How could the work go forward except in and through prayer? The workers have been led to ask God regarding His will in the matter of going forward. Sometimes we hear of a town or *pueblo* where no preaching is ever heard. Then we turn to the Lord and confide in Him for leading and for support, as there will be some things at times which seek to divert our attention and cause us to wonder whether we are right. The twenty-five-year history of the Argentine Mennonite Mission is full of occasions of looking to the Lord for guidance in this ever-important business of reaching out toward new fields, new towns, and points from which to work toward the goal. Sometimes definite calls came from the town to which the Holy Spirit was calling us. Then we had something to encourage us in our endeavors. At other times we received nothing but discouragements, yet in spite of all it was our duty to go ahead and seek to do the will of the Master.

### *Preparing a Place for Services*

Here, too, we leaned on Him who knows the towns and the people, and we could see His leading, as the property owners, who were contrary to the Gospel, willingly rented their houses or halls, for which they would receive the rent regularly. Occasionally, the premises needed to be cleaned and kalsomined before we could feel free to hold meetings for the furtherance of the Gospel.

Some people seemed to think that almost anything would do for the *culto*. We have been compelled to teach them otherwise and show them that the Lord who is Creator and Sustainer of all material and spiritual things, ought to be worshiped and His grace proclaimed to others in a beautiful, well-lighted, and ven-

tilated room, neatly arranged with appropriate texts on the walls, good furniture and seats for all those who attend so that they will be comfortable. Many times it has been impossible to get everything as it should have been; therefore, in spite of all disadvantages, we went on with the hope that when the time was ripe better places would be available. Generally, this came true.

*Preparing Propaganda and Passing It On*

One of the most useful servants of business is propaganda. In what ways can propaganda serve the King's Business? We shall see how various ways of propaganda have been used in the work of extension through evangelism, and some of their known results.

First, we place a sign over the door or on the wall of the premises. This is to indicate to passers-by what is going on in that particular house. For rented halls we usually have the following signs (*letreros*): *Local Evangélicó* (Gospel Hall) *Casa Evangélica* (House of the Gospel), *Culto Evangélico* (Gospel Services or Worship), and for our church buildings we use *Templo, Iglesia, Capilla,* and *Reuniones Evangélicas.* All these indicate places where the Gospel is being taught and preached and that it is for the public who are invited.

Bulletin boards and blackboards with notices of the meetings are helps and have been used advantageously by many workers. Posters which are also used by the American and British Bible Societies have been sent out to the different churches. The opposition has made good use of posters, and we have been rather slow in using them for the Gospel. In the beginning of the work in Santa Rosa in 1921, the opposition plastered not only the walls of the houses in the center of town but also the sidewalks, and everybody who passed that way was compelled to see them. Their message to the people was that the missionaries had arrived to take away from them their faith and carry them off bodily and deliver them to the devil who was paying well for their souls. It was rather farfetched and the Lord had help there for His children. The next day we had planned a plaza (open-air) meeting, which was a great surprise to the town and also to the opposition. It redounded to the honor and glory of the Lord, who saves and satisfies.

Wherever possible the town periodicals have been used by the workers to help make known the Gospel viewpoint and message for the lost. As news items they print the theme of the Sunday sermon, title and golden text of the Sunday Bible school or some text selected from the Proverbs or Gospels. In some towns the newspapermen even asked if we had anything for publication.

Last but not least by any means is the distribution of the religious literature in the shape of pamphlets and tracts which disseminate the Gospel in clear concise words and which often attract the reader and convince him of the error of his way and the punishment which awaits those who reject Christ. In the beginning of the work, a great many tracts were sent from the Bible House, of Los Angeles, California, and from the Free Tract Society, of Los Angeles.

With more workers on the field, it was thought well to print and distribute something distinctly our own, and thus *El Camino Verdadero* (*The True Way*) was launched, and before very long the people knew the missionaries as those who gave away the "paper of the Gospel." At first, as we distributed *El Camino Verdadero,* we did not understand Spanish well enough to speak it. We were told that the people on the streets used to say all kinds of ugly things about us, but since we would not notice them, they quit talking evil about us.

But the interesting thing was that the people received these tracts, and we believe read them also. The number printed was increased many times and Wetzel and Sons of Pehuajó, who did the work, were well pleased with their gain. In fact, when the priest took them to task for printing Protestant papers, Sr. Wetzel told him that as long as we paid so well for the work he did, he would keep on serving the *Protestantes* with his press.

Later Mr. Wetzel gave us lists of names, and we sent *El Camino Verdadero* to hundreds of homes and offices by post. Then we received requests from other towns in which someone had received a copy and wanted some to distribute free. As the years went on, the circulation became larger, and the colporteurs used them as propaganda on their trips. Then as we went to new towns, we always distributed *El Camino Verdadero* the first thing so that the people would know who we were and

why we were in their town. Then also the hours and place of services would be printed on the back together with an invitation to attend. So through the years *El Camino Verdadero* has been useful to the cause. About 17,000 are now printed and distributed each month.

## PERSONAL EVANGELISM—THE ONE-BY-ONE METHOD

### *Bible Reader in the Homes*

The beginning of Bible reading work was suggested by Samuel Musselman, who with S. C. Yoder, secretary of the Mission Board, visited the Argentine Mennonite Mission soon after the first station was opened in Pehuajó. Bro. Musselman also gave some money for Bible reader support.

There were several consecrated young sisters in the church who had a desire to follow the teaching of the Word and the command of our Lord to be witnesses for Him among their own people. They were teachers in the Sunday school, could read clearly and well, had a good testimony, and were cheerful, active, and intelligent believers. Two were selected for this work.

The missionaries taught the Bible readers first. After a Gospel had been selected, for example the Gospel of Luke, an analysis was made; the book was divided into divisions. These were studied with the missionary as a guide; then after united prayer the workers went out on their mission.

The wives of the missionaries usually accompany the Bible readers as they go from house to house asking the women if they would be interested in listening to the Gospel as given in the Word of God for fifteen minutes once a week. If they accept the offer, their names and addresses are listed and they are told at what hour the Bible reader can be expected every week. When about forty homes are listed, the visits are divided so that eight visits are made everyday for five days.

Here is a sample visit: It is a rule in this country for young ladies to walk the street only when accompanied by another woman or even a young girl. So either the pastor's wife or some one selected by her always accompanies the reader in her visits. They call at the house, and when the women and chil-

dren are gathered around and are quiet, a song is taught and all take part. Then after a prayer, the lesson is read clearly and explained. Questions are asked and answered. Another song and a prayer and they are off to the next house. The neighbors may also come in; perhaps there is quite a discussion, as this seems to be something new. Then the reader can give her testimony.

Once a month if not oftener, the missionary's wife goes along to note what progress the reader is making with her friends; to see whether they are understanding some of the Gospel truths; to invite all the listeners to the Sunday school where they will enjoy the singing and the teaching and get acquainted with the other folks who attend; and to explain some point which has come up and needs to be made clear. Each visit is made punctually and, before leaving, a selected tract is left so that the man of the house can also receive some benefit of the visit.

Experiences have shown that only after some months of regular visits do some listeners become interested enough to attend meetings at the mission. Lately these workers have been a great help to the Gospel tent meetings, and many women will carry their babies and stand outside where they can hear but not be seen. A great many testimonies and conversions prove that this is a worth-while work, for many members have heard the Word first through the Bible readers. The readers have a good influence in getting children to the Sunday school. These children are the hope for the future Mennonite Church. Many errors and difficulties have been done away with by the teaching and lives of the Bible readers. Their counsel is sought and heeded many times.

Some of the original Bible readers are now full-time workers in the mission, that is, giving all their time to visitation and teaching. Some have charge of meetings when it is impossible for the missionaries to get to their town which may be twenty or thirty miles away. For some years the Bible readers have been taking Bible courses, and generally they are much better prepared than the original readers. Since some are giving all their time, they are receiving an allowance which compares favorably with the amount earned by dressmakers or office or store

assistants. Ever since the work was started, our people at home have heartily endorsed and supported with their means and prayers the work of the Bible reader in the home. We have every reason to believe that you will continue to do so.

*Bible School Students*

These young men and women come to the Bible School with the purpose of getting a preparation for working in the services of the Lord. Some are capable and will qualify as workers in the mission while others after studying a while will find that they are more useful in doing secular work and giving testimony through their lives and conversations. The power of His Word manifested in their souls and the guidance of His Holy Spirit direct in a zealous endeavor to win souls to Him for His honor and glory, and their experiences while students will go with them for life.

Experiences and examples of other workers are told to the students and, together with the study of books on winning one by one directed by their teachers, give an impulse which is very rarely neglected. Many hours are spent by the students on the streets distributing tracts and having personal conversations with people of all classes. The students also report their more interesting conversations and have united prayer for the salvation of those who have been contacted.

The students as a rule are working for their board some place and utilize their spare time outside of studying, working, and classes, in preparing some soul for the Gospel. One has a barbershop and has a chance to converse with his clients; another rents bicycles in connection with his repair shop; another sells vegetables and gives the Gospel message to them as they select their vegetables and settle their bill. Some of the original students have also been ordained, and their personal work is going on, resulting in the gaining of souls for the Lord.

The students have a great opportunity among the young people, and their work has not been in vain. They learn to know the people and then when the individual person is ready, he can be shown the love of God for him and for all the world. Thus some of these have been saved and are now also engaged in the great business of winning others one by one for the glory of the

Saviour. We have faith in the young people of the Mennonite Church in Argentina for the future.

*Bible Sellers or Colporteurs*

The missionaries believe that every member of the church should own a good, clearly printed Bible and, if possible, a Bible dictionary and concordance. We also believe that every Argentine family should have a Bible or Testament. The questions come up: Shall the workers constitute themselves as agents for the distribution of these books? Is the missionary responsible for seeing that these families have Bibles or Testaments? We believe he is.

The Bible societies have colporteurs who give all their time to the selling of Bibles, and sometimes these consecrated men come through the towns that have mission stations and ask the colaboration of the missionaries. This the missionaries are only too glad to give and, besides giving them their meals, they are presented at the meetings to the members who will pray for their work and suggest folks who might buy either Bibles or Testaments. In some cases these colporteurs have good success in placing books while at other times it seems that the people have no interest whatever in them.

The missionary also seeks among his flock one who has a pleasing personality and who is a good conversationalist and who has a desire to place the Word of God in all the homes possible. He is sent out with tracts and an assortment of books among his friends and neighbors. If the work is congenial to him, he can go to other towns and canvass every home. Some get a sulky or cart and take a cot and bedding along and go from farm to farm visiting quite a few homes in a two weeks' trip and selling many books. Sometimes he must take chickens, eggs, or produce instead of money. One among our best and most consecrated colporteurs was José Zagami, who later was appointed a worker and pastor until he was called up higher.

Others of our members have travelled from one end of the district to the other notwithstanding heat and cold, dry winds and rainstorms, and poor sales. But that makes no difference when the heart is in the work and when they want to see souls saved for the Lord. They will receive their reward from Him.

The colporteurs have contacted many families and many of the members have heard the Gospel first through the brave and unselfish brethren who are giving their best to the Master because they love Him and desire to serve Him.

### PERSONAL EVANGELISM BY THE PASTOR

Many times experiences like the following have encouraged missionaries after what seemed to be a day of hard work and no results.

One afternoon I had been walking from house to house giving away tracts and inviting people to the Gospel meetings. When I came to a poor part of the town where the small one- or two-room houses were built toward the rear of the lot, I called the people out by clapping my hands. After giving the paper and talking a few words, I passed on to the next place.

The time was passing. It was getting late and, at what I had thought would be the last stop, no one answered my repeated clapping. I was about to go home but a Voice said, "Try again"; so I entered the gate, went closer to the house, and again I clapped. A little girl came running out of the house, and, taking the tracts, thanked me and ran into the house again. I closed the gate, walked home, ate supper and went to the meeting which was announced for that night.

The next morning early a convert came to the house to ask me if I had been distributing tracts out his way the evening before. He then told me that in a neighboring house there was an old man quite sick in bed. When he heard someone read a tract, he remarked that he remembered some things which happened to him as a boy. The convert had visited him that evening and he asked the sick man if he would like to have the pastor visit him. He replied, "Yes, I would enjoy it."

So we visited him at once. We found that he was born in England, had attended a Sunday school, and while yet a boy emigrated to Argentina where he had lived on a farm for fifty years without hearing any more of the Gospel until he had heard the tract read the evening before. It was the tract that I had given to the girl.

He could not speak English very well, but he brightened up when Psalm 23 and portions of the Gospels were repeated in

English. That morning he accepted salvation as a free gift from the Lord and peace filled his soul. Again I was made to see that God does lead if we will only follow Him. God grant us the desire to do His will in spite of all discouragements.

## PREACHING EVANGELISM

### *Preaching the Gospel in the Streets and Plazas*

In the early years of evangelism in this country, it was seen that the Gospel had to be taken to the people in their homes and sometimes on the street. The principal objective was to interest souls in their own salvation. The experiences of the first years are very interesting to those who participated and to those who contributed to their success by means of their prayers.

The first open-air meeting in Santa Rosa had for its object the refutation of malicious lies published about the missionaries by the Roman Catholic priest. The thing which astonished us was the fact that two evangelists with experience in open-air meetings had just arrived and were willing to co-operate with us in securing permission and making propaganda for the meeting, which was new to us and also for the authorities of the city.

We were told to bring a sample of the propaganda to the office, and as we were talking, the clerk showed us a sample of some that the priest had just brought in and received permission to distribute that night. In it were a lot more lies about us, and it called on the people to refuse to rent us a house.

We spent hours in prayer and preparation for the propaganda and for the meeting. The next morning we were out on the street quite early and found the people reading the posters which the priest had distributed, and as we came along they were astonished that we were ready with our propaganda so quickly. Our handbills notified the town that a great meeting would be held that afternoon in the public square (plaza) and that we would publicly state our reasons for preaching the Gospel and also expose the errors of the Roman Catholic priest.

Before three o'clock that afternoon, a large number of people had gathered in the plaza and were asking one another,

"Who are the *Evangelistas?*" "What do they want in Santa Rosa?" "What do they teach?" "Are they like the socialists?"

But the priest was not idle either. He had made some very good plans, and he did not propose to allow us to have our meetings without doing all in his power to frustrate our plans and make the people believe we were evil indeed.

Before the meeting, we prayed for God to lead and bless the efforts made in His name; then we went over to the plaza carrying our Bibles and hymnbooks and an empty wooden box, which was to be the platform for the speakers.

While we were singing the hymns, we noticed the people looking over toward the Roman Catholic Church, and then we heard the bells being rung as fast as possible in order to make such a noise that no one could hear our speakers, but when the people heard the noise and saw our speaker begin, they all gathered round him in order to hear what was being said.

Then we heard singing from the direction of the church and behold the whole group of Catholic orphans all dressed in white were in front of the plaza and the priest and sisters were trying to get the people away from our meeting. After the speakers had finished, they were surrounded by the men who had been listening. Some promised their support and others offered to rent their houses for services. Later on a nice house was rented; it was better for the purpose than the one that the priest did not want us to have; he had threatened the owner telling him that houses sometimes caught fire in mysterious ways with no clues. The meeting proved to us that God was leading and we were encouraged as we saw that the plans of the priest against us had not flourished.

Visits by evangelists at our missions are taken advantage of for having open-air meetings and also during times of conferences or special meetings when there are larger groups to help make propaganda and distribute tracts and do personal work. Sometimes there are unruly men or boys on the outskirts of the crowd who sneer at and make light of the Gospel. We take no notice unless it is too rough; then we call for the police and soon all is very quiet. After open-air meetings, some new faces are often seen in our services. Some of these have been converted and are now faithful members with good testimonies, giving

their life to the Lord and always telling others how they first heard the Word in an open-air meeting.

*Preaching the Gospel from the Bible Coach*

Before our mission was opened in this country, some English Plymouth Brethren had been evangelizing with Bible coaches drawn by horses. The Evangelical Union of South America was also engaged in this kind of work. These societies had their coaches specially built to serve as a bookstore and an apartment on wheels. Their trips were of necessity short and not far from their homes. Sometimes they had the pleasure of seeing several souls in a town seek the Lord and these afterwards met together and formed a group of believers. Then the workers would stay with the Coach and visit and evangelize the countryside.

Several times the Evangelical Union Coach passed through Trenque Lauquen, Tres Lomas, and Pehuajó, and each time our missionaries were impressed with the usefulness of the Coach as a portable Bible and religious bookstore in taking the Word both in print and in spoken word to other towns and adjoining farms.

Since we believed that an auto Bible Coach would be a blessing to the work, prayer was made and some articles written for the church papers describing what could be done with a coach in our large district along the Western Railroad. In 1929 through the blessing of the Lord and the hearty response of the church at home, one was provided, which has since been used in every part of the district.

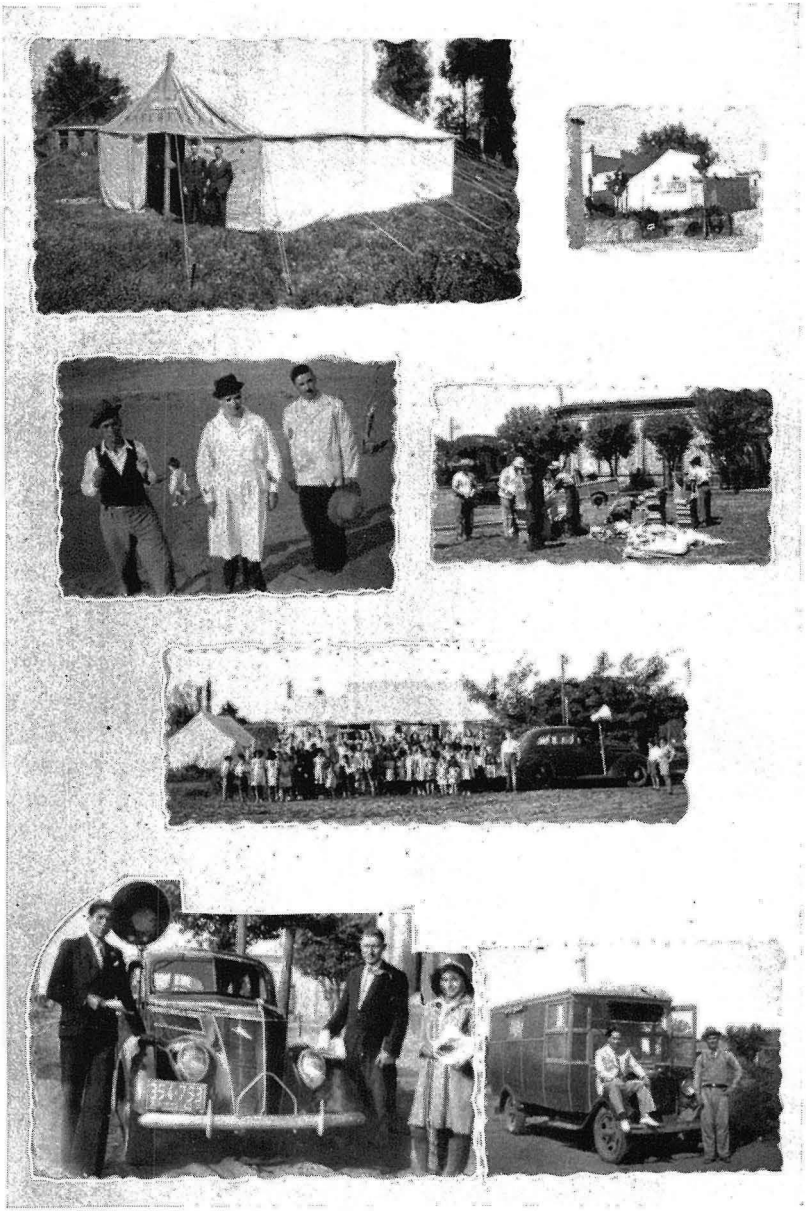
A picture of the Bible Coach included in this book will show the outside. It is equipped to live in and has such conveniences as a twenty-five gallon water tank with pump and sink; a cupboard with necessary cooking utensils and room for eatables; and also a small gasoline stove for cooking. It also has two mattresses on two boxes about two feet high by six feet long. In the boxes are kept the bed clothing, suitcases, and some books. At the rear end of the Coach are two small wardrobes and between them a bookcase where books are displayed. Here also is a folding table which can be removed if unwanted. The ceiling is high enough so that a person can walk comfortably in the

Coach. At the rear end on the outside a door can be let down, which serves as a good strong platform for street and plaza meetings. Bibles and Testaments and some religious books can be seen when the platform is down; the platform also serves as a counter. It draws quite a lot of attention and many sales are made in this way.

Our Bible Coach was made in Buenos Aires in 1929. Mr. P. Penzotti, who is the secretary of the American Bible Society, donated a good supply of Bibles, Testaments, Gospels, and other portions of the Scriptures. The religious books are available in the Evangelical bookstores at wholesale prices. Mr. Penzotti and T. K. Hershey drove the Coach as far as Bragado and were well pleased with the arrangements and accommodations built into the Coach. Next it was taken to Pehuajó for a special occasion, but on the way it had its first mishap. The road was new for us and we were misdirected, ending up in a mud hole out of which we were pulled with the help of a truck of Mr. Shields, the Ford agent of Pehuajó.

The Coach as an agency for Gospel propaganda is very useful. When we arrive at a town where meetings are to be held, the first thing to do is to visit the police and inform them of our intention to hold meetings asking them where we could hold them and also for protection against trouble makers. Then the Coach is driven through the streets with someone announcing the meeting through a megaphone or loudspeaker and with others walking by the side of the Coach distributing tracts and inviting everyone to the plaza. At the plaza all the members of the church and visitors begin singing some choruses. The platform of the Coach is made ready while the people look on. Then the speaker ascends to the platform, and as he begins to talk, the people come closer and listen with close attention. Many are curious and some have a desire to know what the *gringos* (foreigners) want to tell them, as there is no collection taken up and it must cost something to run such a car around the country.

The speaker, after introducing himself, calls on the preacher who tells why the Coach is there and then preaches the Gospel, as we say, straight from the shoulder, telling of God's plan of salvation. Good crowds listen to songs and messages. Some



TENT CAMPAIGNS

TOP: Gospel tent ready for action; Tent No. 3
SECOND: Colporteurs on hike; setting up
THIRD: A children's meeting
FOURTH: Propaganda for special meetings; Bible Coach and workers

books are sold. Many hear the Gospel for the first time as it is preached from the Bible Coach.

*Preaching the Gospel in Tent Meetings*

The first tent set up for Gospel meetings in our mission was in Pehuajó in 1922 during an evangelistic tour of the Christian Missionary Alliance group, which are well equipped and prepared with Argentine preachers and singers aided by several missionaries. About fifty persons made a profession of faith in Christ as their Saviour and we were all aglow with enthusiasm for tent meetings in our towns. The missionary in charge of the tent meetings told us that it would be fine if a majority of the professed converts were to follow on faithfully. His experience had been that less than 5 per cent would keep on attending services in the hall, be really converted and baptized, and become members of the church. We believed that more than that would prove faithful, but we found out later to our sorrow that the missionary was right in regard to true conversions. We were encouraged though by the fact that many new friends had been won for the mission and soon others were coming and being saved.

The propaganda effect was very satisfactory as the doctrines taught by the mission had been proved by the Word of God to be true and were disseminated more and more by those who sympathized with the Gospel plan of salvation. Therefore even though the immediate results of tent meetings were far from gratifying, we were learning to favor them as a means of evangelization and began praying for a tent to be used in the towns of our district.

It was in October 1933 that evangelistic meetings were first held in our new tent. It was oval shaped, 26 feet by 40 feet, with seats for about one hundred persons. In front of the tent in big letters are the words *Carpa Evangelica* (Gospel Tent). It is taken from town to town on a trailer purchased for that purpose, which is attached to the Bible Coach.

During the first season the tent meetings were held in seventeen towns and with hundreds of public confessions. Many people heard the Gospel for the first time and a goodly number were really saved and are now members of the church. This

first tent has now been used up completely, and by the grace of our Lord and the generosity of our brethren in the homeland, three new tents are now in use in Argentina, two in Buenos Aires Province and one in the hills of Córdoba.

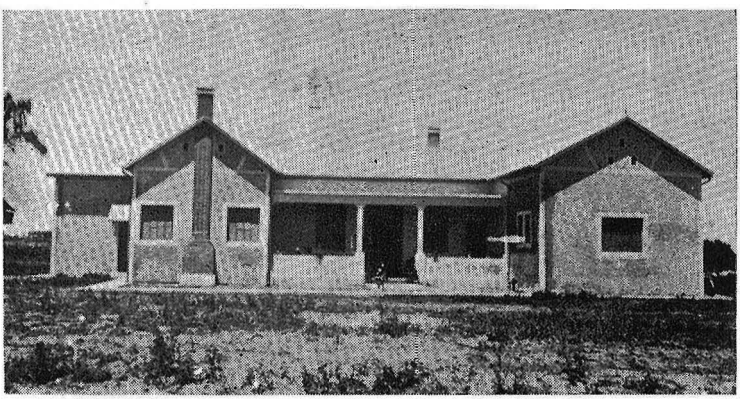
The new tents are handier to carry around and to put up. New trailers carry them to the lot which has been selected where two or three men or boys can put them up in a few hours. Many times a crowd of children come to see whether a new circus or merry-go-round is being set up for their delight, and a good many are disappointed when they are told it is the *Carpa Evangelica.* But they will tell their parents who will come to the tent that evening if possible.

After the tent is all set up, with chairs or benches and a platform with table or pulpit, the workers will separate and walk over the town with tracts and notices concerning the meetings. Some will reject them as they are of another religion; others will be more open and accept them for reading in the home. Others will offer to help distribute and take us to homes of *Protestantes* who as a rule are quite well known in the town as every one knows they live a different life.

The Bible Coach with megaphone is driven over the outskirts, and every one should hear the invitation to listen to the Gospel in the tent; it is free; no collection will be taken; tracts will be given free, also Gospels, to those who ask for them.

When the meeting hour arrives, all the members and workers who can possibly do so are at this first meeting and the singing of Gospel songs fills the air. Music has charms and even the toughest boys will be quiet while we sing. Then someone will tell the people that our object is to preach the Gospel. Next the preacher will take some Gospel incident with an illustration and tell what he can in a few minutes of the great plan of salvation by faith. More songs follow and then the announcement is made of a children's or women's meeting to be held that week some afternoon. An earnest invitation is given to the ones present to bring someone with them the following night. The people go home conversing about the sermon, some in favor and some against the points of the sermon. The workers who stay with the tent prepare for the night, and those who have come from other towns go home rejoicing.

We have related briefly the methods used for the extension of the Kingdom of God through evangelism. It is hardly probable that the whole story has been told because so much can be done and is being done in a private and personal way. Who knows all the methods that individual Christians of our congregations have used? One thing we are sure of, they used the Sword of the Spirit and they spoke from heart conviction. The joy of the Lord beamed from their countenances; the still small Voice urged them on; and in God's own time and way the Word accomplished that which pleased Him.



The Orphanage at Bragado. See page 141.

CHAPTER VI

# OUR INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR PROGRAMS

BY N. LITWILLER

Institutional work in a foreign mission organization is looked upon by some faithful supporters with fears and doubts. This is undoubtedly due to the emphasis some missionaries placed and are placing on these activities at the expense of direct evangelistic work. It is undoubtedly true that some foreign mission groups have made institutional work their main activity, hoping by means of schools, hospitals, and other social activities to create a better environment and a more sympathetic attitude toward evangelical work. It is not for us to judge the motives of such groups, but we do wish to assure our sympathetic constituency at home that as far as the Argentine Mennonite Mission is concerned our institutions were not brought into being as an end in themselves. Our mission has and does insist on the preaching of the Word as the only effective means for the regeneration and salvation of souls. But we feel that all will concede that in order to know the Word and rightly interpret it, a Bible School is not out of place, but in reality indispensable. In the same way we can appreciate the fact that in the course of a few years the problem of orphans and old and abandoned people must be solved, and naturally the mission tries to find a solution by establishing adequate homes for the needy. Thus we can understand how our Bible School, clinic, Orphanage, Printery, and kindergartens arose out of a need in the church as well as to show to the world the practical side of Christianity.

The institutional work undertaken by the Argentine Mennonite Mission includes the kindergartens and day schools, the Bible School, the Orphanage, the Printery, the clinic, and the Old People's Home (in project). The missionary group and annual conference appoint a committee each year for every one of these institutions.

## THE KINDERGARTEN

When the Mennonite missionaries first stepped on Argentine soil in the year 1917, the Argentine educational system was not developed as we find it today. Many parents who were anxious to keep their children off the street as well as get them started early in their primary studies, were quite ready to send their sons and daughters to the first mission kindergartens. The legal age for entering the provincial grade schools was eight years. The mission took advantage of this situation and received all the children under eight years of age who wished to attend. In this way the studious child sometimes at the age of eight was ready to enter the second or third grade of the provincial schools, and thus he gained time. This was undoubtedly providential, for the mission, which in those days was very little known, was often misrepresented and misunderstood.

Through the first kindergartens, the missionaries were able to contact the parents of the community and tell them of the Gospel. Furthermore, the wonderful opportunities inherent in every child were taken as a real challenge. The Argentine system made little or no attempt at moral and spiritual training. And so in this modern country, full of material advantages, many boys and girls received their first concept of the Creator and the Saviour in the kindergarten. Here first they learned that truth and purity and honesty are virtues to be followed and that lying, thieving, cheating, and filthy conversations are sinful and displeasing to the Lord Jesus. In spite of the fact that the great majority of the children who studied in those first years had no healthful and colaborating home influence, yet the kindergartens did bear some fruit. Dr. Angel Petrocelli, a member of our church who maintained his Christian faith during the years of adverse influence in medical training, learned not only his ABC's at the Pehuajó kindergarten but also the first Bible verses, which undoubtedly influenced him later to accept Christ as his personal Saviour. His grandmother is also converted and a faithful member of the church and even now deplores the time of her ignorance when she resisted the Spirit and influenced her older children against the Gospel.

The kindergarten and the lower grades were used as evangelizing agencies, for in addition to the secular subjects that

were taught daily, part of the time was dedicated to a Bible story, singing, and prayer, as well as memorizing important Bible verses. Many of these children continued to come to Sunday school; some were converted but practically all acquired a sympathetic attitude toward the evangelical work, and that means something for a Gospel work which is ordinarily surrounded by a certain hostile and suspicious element. These same children also attended the daily vacation Bible schools, took part in the Christmas programs, and in general came to the mission in their spare time to play in the *patio* or meet with their pals to while away the time. For many, the mission, because of the social contacts made there, was a sort of second home during their formative years.

The kindergartens and day school prospered especially in Pehuajó, Trenque Lauquen, Santa Rosa, Carlos Casáres, Tres Lomas, and America, and possibly reached their apogee in the years 1930-1934 with 344 children enrolled in the different schools and an average attendance of 227. The good brethren in the homeland who aided in the support of this work with their offerings can rest assured that their money was well applied.

However, in the last ten years circumstances have changed. The age limit for entering the provincial and national schools has been lowered. Naturally parents prefer to send their children to an official school where they pay no fees rather than to a private school where a fee, even though small, is charged. This change of age limit has helped to reduce our enrollment.

Other factors that have contributed to the closing up of some of our schools were: (a) more and better government schools to accommodate the children; (b) stricter government regulations with reference to employing trained teachers. We should keep in mind that most of our kindergarten teachers have not had more than a common school education and not all have completed their primary school. (c) The government requirements for equipment and material make it well-nigh impossible for a private school to compete with official institutions.

For the foregoing reasons and possibly because of some local situations the kindergartens in Carlos Casáres, Tres Lomas, Santa Rosa, and America have been closed. Pehuajó and

Trenque Lauquen still continue their schools with the reduced enrollment of eighteen and twenty respectively for the year 1941.

This write-up would not be complete if we would not mention the effort made in Pehuajó for a period of years to give all the grade work in accordance with the provincial program. While it is true that there were a few prosperous years, the interest and constituency were not sufficiently large to warrant continuing with the school. Colegio Ward, a Methodist institution on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, caters to the better class of society and has a primary and secondary school with over 800 paying students.

The missionary promoters of the Pehuajó school, because of its geographical situation and economical limitations, could never hope to consider such a project, and since it was not possible to give something better than the state provided in addition to the moral and religious teaching, it was considered wiser to discontinue the school.

We should not feel bad, however, for the fact that our modest kindergartens have closed their doors. They fulfilled their purpose well. In the days when the mission was young and unknown, the schools formed a necessary connecting link between us and the public which we tried to reach. The extremely small fee charged was a proof of our sincerity and an assurance that we had no ulterior motives. Changing circumstances require constant adjustments. The time may come again when every evangelical community may have to consider most seriously the problem of primary and secondary education, since we can easily conceive of an educational system in a modern Latin American state sponsoring the official Roman religion in such a way that evangelical children will not be able conscientiously to attend public schools any longer.

Let us hope and pray that that day may never come, but if it should come, we are confident that the experience gained through our little kindergartens and day schools will help us not only to plan wisely but also to gain new friends through this institution.

It may not be out of place to state here that our kindergarten teachers in those early years were also our Bible readers. They

taught in the morning and continued their noble work in the afternoon by going from home to home to read and explain the Bible. A fuller description of their work is given in Chapter VI.

## THE BIBLE SCHOOL

From the very beginning of our work, we felt a deep need for a Bible training school. The first missionaries referred to this need and gave the following as some of their reasons (*Annual Mission Board Report,* 1924, page 24) :

"1. The evangelization of the Argentine must ultimately be realized by the Argentines themselves. Furthermore, experience from other denominations has proved that untrained and unprepared native workers have not proved to be very successful.

"2. The Argentine worker understands his people, their customs, manners, and habits which gives him an approach that the foreigner does not have.

"3. Ninety per cent of the university students are skeptical and atheistic, and to meet these trained people, a worker should have some training.

"4. Training is necessary to meet the illiteracy of the country which is still considerable.

"5. It is financially advantageous to prepare and equip a native worker rather than to send and support a North American missionary family."

Even though the foregoing points were given eighteen years ago, they still hold true. Some mission boards have withdrawn practically all their missionaries from pastoral work, and maintain only those who give their time to teaching in Bible training schools or are engaged in institutional work of a specialized nature.

Shortly after the organization of the work in Pehuajó a group of young believers were insistent on receiving more Bible training. A two-semester course of study was worked out. The school started off with some sixteen enrolled, who met two nights a week. Interest was very good, but the missionary in charge was already overloaded and broke down in health much to the regret of the students. The plan was abandoned for the time being, and possibly some of the students who would have

continued never returned several years later when the school was finally reopened. An article in the *Christian Monitor,* December, 1922, mentioned this great need.

During the year 1926 another attempt was made to teach in a systematic way a group of interested young people in Pehuajó, but the one in charge at that time had a limited command of the Spanish and then was transferred to another town, and the plan had to be abandoned again; this time for lack of workers.

It is quite natural that at the initiation of a work like this one should have to contend with many problems. There was not only the question of arranging for the support of the students but of thinking out a plan for some who could not attend because of financial obligations to the home. The financial problem was ever present. Another matter that had to be decided was the minimum entrance requirements for students. Some applicants were genuinely converted and well meaning but had barely sufficient training to read and write properly. It was felt that we should set up a standard of entrance requirements.

Undoubtedly Christianity is known by its leaders, and even the type of Christianity is determined by its leaders. Our future leaders, we felt, should have a thorough knowledge of the false and pernicious systems of religion as well as a proper understanding of the great principles of truth as found in the Bible. Christianity is judged and determined to quite an extent, especially in this country, by what its leaders are and know and do. Because of this challenge, a few evangelical bodies in South America have set up standards of training equal to the standards of their home church. The Methodist Seminary insists on its ministerial candidates having graduated from the very complete secondary school course as given by the National College. Others are not quite so strict but insist on a good groundwork of general knowledge. Considering therefore the experiences of others as well as our own needs, we felt that our candidates should have at least the equivalent of a grade school education with special emphasis on their ability to speak and write their own language properly, and should be acquainted with the history of their own country as well as have some general ideas of world history.

Another problem that was debated for some time was

Bible School students in 1936

Bible School students in 1942

whether it would be better to have a school centrally located or whether it would be advisable for the professors to be itinerant. This problem arose because the possible candidates might not be able to leave their homes or home town to attend school.

In the early part of 1926 the writer taught a Bible class in Trenque Lauquen one night a week and another class in Pehuajó for one night a week. Experience revealed, however, that one class a week of supervised study was not sufficient to do effective work. Furthermore, these classes were given in the evening and the students were tired and could do very little home-work.

It was then decided to try to establish a day Bible School in Pehuajó with classes at least three times a week. But this school had barely started when in July 1927 the Shank family, because of health, had to leave their station, and I with my family moved to Trenque Lauquen to take charge of the congregation. This meant that the Bible School in Pehuajó was closed again for a short period until readjustments could be made. Later on I made periodic trips to Pehuajó to teach the few students who by this time had not lost their interest in Bible study. By October 1928 the Shank family was able to return to our mission district and there was another shifting of workers. The workers felt that the time had come to do more Bible school work as well as advanced grade work. Accordingly we were moved back from Trenque Lauquen to Pehuajó, thus exchanging places with the Hersheys who gave up Pehuajó for Trenque Lauquen. The Shank family also was moved to Pehuajó and thus Brother Shank and I could give all our time to the Bible School, day school, and church work in Pehuajó.

Responsibilities were soon divided, the Shanks being placed in charge of the boarding day school Instituto Americano with Brother Shank also as one of the professors in the Bible School. We were given charge of the pastoral work and I was named principal of the Bible School. By 1929 the students, Pablo Cavadore and Santiago Battaglia, had finished the three years' course, and we rejoiced to have our first graduation exercises. By 1932 Quintina Gutiérrez, Carlos Barbosa, and Feliciano Gorjón also received their diplomas, and two of these were appointed by the mission as workers.

But it was felt at this time that our policy was not quite satisfactory. The students who had studied thus far and had graduated were receiving a definite monthly allowance from the mission. This arrangement was satisfactory with a small group, but we questioned whether it was a wise policy to invite young men and women to study with a promise of an allowance and yet with no definite assurance that all such students would become satisfactory workers. Furthermore, the budget was somewhat limited, and this gave rise to the idea of some possible plan whereby students could earn their living, or at least part of it, while they were studying.

Inasmuch as our furlough was due at this time, I was given permission to visit the home churches and solicit a loan so as to be able to buy a small farm on which to provide work for the students. Many friends responded, some with outright gifts and others with loans for an indefinite period. On our return to the field we bought a farm, but administering the farm took too much of my time. The farm was therefore sold again and the money returned to the lenders. The money which had been given outright for the experiment had been invested in chattels and with the consent of donors was given over to our Orphanage here in Bragado. The Orphanage in return for this gift has accepted the obligation to provide board and room in exchange for work for a limited number of Bible students who wish to study. With this arrangement one of our problems is fairly well solved. Any student who does not have the means can now come to Bragado and receive his board and room for three hours' work a day on the Orphanage truck farm. The rest of his time he can devote to study and to practical Christian work. Under this arrangement, four more students finished their training in 1938.

It is quite interesting to observe here that some of these students who had to work in this way and were rather dissatisfied with the arrangement, now after four years, regret the fact that they expressed themselves thus, during their school years. The plan is satisfactory for those who can leave home and take the time to study.

We have, however, in the large territory with its many towns and many villages quite a few young people who would like to

study but because of home obligations cannot come to our school in Bragado. For these, the Bible School Committee has tried to do something. A short winter term was offered one year with fair results. Another short term Bible school is being planned to be held in connection with a Young People's Retreat in summer instead of winter. Encouragement has also been given to local Bible classes in charge of the pastor of each town. In some congregations these classes maintain their interest in Bible study even though the interested ones have their daily work or are students in the secondary schools of the towns where they reside. The Bible School will give credit for all faithful work done in a systematic way in the local churches.

There is no doubt as to the need of a Bible training school. During these years there have been approximately twenty students who have taken most of the studies. Not all are in Christian work. At the time of writing, July 1942, there are five more young men studying, and we are hopeful that these will all be useful in our work after they complete their studies. We should be very happy indeed if we could have at least one student from every congregation to dedicate his or her life completely to the service of the Lord and qualify himself by studying with that purpose a few years in our Bible School.

As matters stand now, we suggest to our students that they complete their primary school work after which we offer the following three years' course. Each course listed represents thirty-six hours of classwork.

*First Year*

Old Testament History
Inter-Testamentary History
Interpretation of the Gospel of Mark
Interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew
Interpretation of the Book of Acts
The Doctrine of Prayer
The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit
The Teachings of Jesus
Personal Work
Public Speaking
Comparative Religions

A Review of World Missions
Missions in South America
An Introduction to Psychology

*Second Year*

An Introduction to the Bible
The Poetical Literature
The Life of Christ—Luke
An Interpretation of the Early Pauline Epistles
An Interpretation of the Later Pauline Epistles
Church Ordinances
Early Church History
Mediaeval and Modern Church History
The History of the Mennonite Church
Christianity and Modern Philosophy
Sociology
Sermon Outlining
The Psychology of Religious Experience
The History, Curriculum, and Methods of Religious Education
Pedagogy

*Third Year*

A Review of the Prophetical Books
Exegesis of Prophecy
Messianic Prophecy
Interpretation of the Gospel of John
Interpretation of the General Epistles
Interpretation of Hebrews
Interpretation of the Book of Revelation
Systematic Theology (two courses)
Eschatology
Advanced Sermon Outlining
Practical Preaching
The Active Church

At the close of this course each student is supposed to write an original paper, corresponding to a thesis, on some subject decided upon by him and one of the professors.

## THE ORPHANAGE

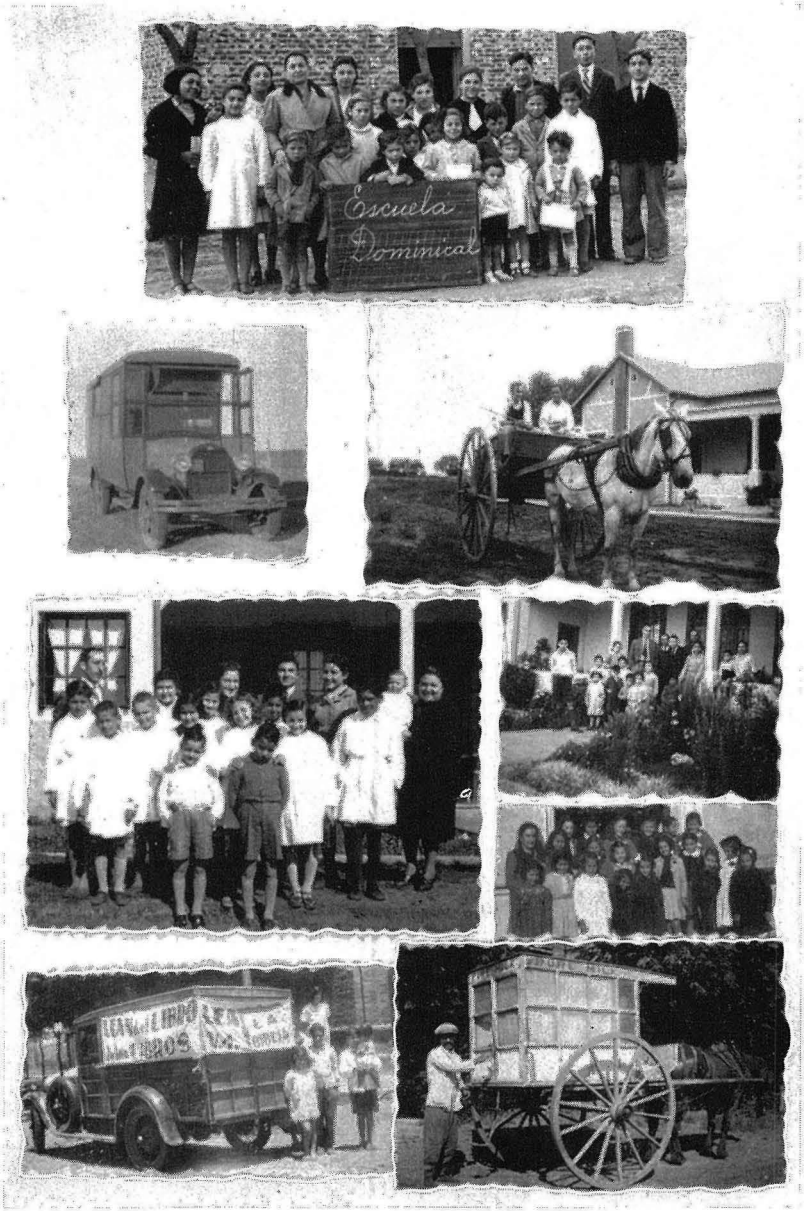
"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James). When day after day on a cold winter morning, barefooted, underfed, and ill-clothed children come to the door of the mission asking for a bit of leftover food or bread, or an old piece of cast-off clothing, and when after having made thorough investigations, you find to be true what these little beggars have told you—that their father has died and that mother is sick in bed and there is nothing to eat in the little mud floored and walled hut, and they are very cold—then it does not take long for the missionary to react and in the Spirit of Jesus manifest not only sympathy but do something about it.

The need of having an Orphanage was felt keenly by the missionaries after having been on the field but a short time. There were members of our church who were called home to their eternal reward, but their one difficulty was their children: "The children!" "My boy!" "My darling daughter!" "What will happen to them in this cruel and unfriendly world?" That seemed to make the anticipated joys of heaven just a little less. This is the primary object of our home, to care for the children of our members who have passed away.

Moreover there are other worthy children who are not orphans, but in a worse plight. They were born out of wedlock and the one who should support them has abandoned them.* Their mother, who in the meantime has become converted, cannot provide for her large family in an honest way and asks us to please take some of her children and bring them up in a Christian environment and influence.

It was for such reasons as these that definite steps were taken in the year 1926. At that Mission Council, Sisters Gamber and Hallman were authorized to take a limited number of needy children into their quarters at Trenque Lauquen. These quar-

*It frequently occurs that a couple may live together for many years without having been married, and finally the man may get disgusted about something and simply leave his wife. Since they were not married there is no law that compels him to continue his support of his companion and children.




TOP: Sunday school in Treinta de Agosto, Sister Cavadore in charge
SECOND: Bible Coach; horse and cart on Orphanage farm
THIRD: Orphanage group, 1942; Orphanage group, 1938; A Sunday-school class, Bragado
FOURTH: Bible van about 1928; a milkman

ters soon became too small and by April 1926 the men missionaries were busy with hammers and saws, making partitions in what had formerly been the school building at Pehuajó. There were twelve beds provided and on May 17, 1926, the home was formally opened.

The place soon became too small again. But due to the fact that through illness the Shank family had to move away from Trenque Lauquen, the mission home was vacant The Orphanage was moved to Trenque Lauquen until a more suitable place could be found. On July 16, 1927, the Orphanage was moved again from the mission home to the property of a milling company. The offices of the mill provided ample room for the large family. Six more beds were added and twenty children could be accommodated if necessary. N. Litwiller was the administrator; Sister Vera Hallman, the matron; and Sister Selena Gamber, the nurse in charge.

When the furlough of Sisters Hallman and Gamber came due in January 1929, Brother and Sister Snyder were given the supervision of the Orphanage. Anita Cavadore, a native worker and Bible reader, went to the home as a helper for one year. By 1930 Laura Rivas took Sister Cavadore's place as a helper. The Orphanage was now full of inmates with more requests for admittance. In March 1932 María Cavadore took the place of Sister Rivas, the former having more training to help in the education of the older children. The shortage of workers made it necessary for the Snyders to take charge of the work in America. The books and the administration of the institution were therefore handed over to T. K. Hershey and wife, who were then in charge of the mission in Trenque Lauquen.

Then for a number of years the history of the Orphanage reminds us of the wanderings of Israel. Because of a lack of workers and because of rumors that the mill property was to be sold, the Orphanage family was separated. On August 9, 1932, the girls were moved to the Trenque Lauquen mission home in charge of Brother and Sister Hershey. The boys lived about a block and a half from the mission in charge of the widow, Sister María de Battaglia. The boys came to the mission for their meals and Bible instruction. The diary of the home mentions many interesting problems, as the problem of pro-

viding a good cook, the problem of helpers, the problem of the children's school and education, all because we had neither a permanent home nor helpers. The cooks were not always reliable and the helpers inexperienced.

During this period Sisters Regina Scussel, Carmen Gómez, Agnes Hamilton, and Lucía Battaglia helped at different times, but the situation was by no means satisfactory. There were twenty children, belonging to the same home, living in two different houses a block and a half apart. Administration, care, discipline, and supervision were all very much handicapped.

The matter was brought to the Mission Council in 1934 for solution. It was here decided that the smaller girls be sent to Pehuajó in charge of Brother and Sister Shank who at that time were at the head of our boarding school, Instituto Americano. This meant that the girls would no longer attend public school but rather get their training at our own denominational school. It was further decided at the 1934 Mission Council that the boys be sent to a rented truck farm in Bragado.

Consequently in February 1934 the girls were moved back to Pehuajó. The boy inmates were moved to the Trenque Lauquen mission property for the time being since the truck farm in Bragado was not ready and because Sister María de Battaglia in whose home they had stayed could keep them no longer.

In March 1934 a truck farm was taken over conditionally, pending permission from the Mission Board to buy later. This farm of about twenty-one acres is located just outside the city limits of Bragado, about fifteen blocks from the mission, and is the property which at present is being occupied by the home. The promised land is in sight but Israel has not entered into its possession as yet!

The truck farm was fairly well equipped for chicken and rabbit raising, had a fine fruit orchard, an apiary of fifteen hives of bees, two small houses, a windmill with a large water tank and piping for irrigational purposes, a horse, and other equipment. Brother Hershey was appointed to supervise this farm in addition to his work in Trenque Lauquen. Taking into consideration that Bragado and Trenque Lauquen are about 145 miles apart, it must be admitted that this arrangement was not very satisfactory. However, the missionaries did the best they

could under the adverse circumstances of lack of helpers and lack of housing space for the children.

By April 1934, Don Juan Cavadore's services were secured as gardener. The next month, Sister Hershey with two of the older boys, Carlos Acosta and Manuel Rivas, moved to the Orphanage grounds with Sister Hershey as cook and the boys as helpers on the farm. By June 1934 the remodeling of the rooms took place so as to be able to accommodate at least the boys in the Home. By August 1934 all the boys of the home were taken to the Bragado truck farm.

It should be said here, however, that when the mill property was left and the children taken to the mission property in Trenque Lauquen, this arrangement was thought to be temporary for a few months. The Lord, however, let us wait, and for two years the Orphanage was kept in Trenque Lauquen before the change to Bragado was finally made.

Naturally under these uncertain circumstances we could not take in new children, but rather kept only those with whom we had a definite obligation until they were eighteen years old. Since there were no suitable accommodations in Bragado at this time for both sexes, only the boys were brought to Bragado and the older girl to help in the work. Thus five boys and one girl formed the first family here in Bragado. The other girls continued as boarding pupils in the Instituto Americano in Pehuajó. During these years plans were presented and revised for a permanent building but, because of an economic depression, the funds were low and the Mission Board at home did not see its way clear to concede our requests along this line.

By September 1934, Brother and Sister Hershey started winding up things in Trenque Lauquen to prepare for their furlough. Their sailing date was October 12, 1934. Brother and Sister Swartzentruber moved from Tres Lomas to the Bragado Mission, with Brother Swartzentruber also administrator of the Orphanage. Sisters Angela and María Cavadore at the same time were in direct charge of the Home and then Brother Juan Cavadore continued as gardener.

The history of the Orphanage for the year 1935 can be written very briefly. Lack of funds for building made it impossible to keep all the children there. No family was available to

put in charge of the boys then in Bragado on the truck farm. The Cavadore sisters in charge could not continue.

Because of the impossibility of finding adequate help it was finally decided to place all our children in private homes for the time being and pay a partial support for them from the Orphanage Fund. Naturally this was only a temporary arrangement and far from ideal, even though the children were taken care of and attended our religious services in the towns where they had been allocated. The fact was that the maintenance expense was very much less than what it had been while the home was kept up. The farm was rented out and the proceeds used for the benefit of the Orphanage. There were nine boys and six girls under this arrangement, which had to continue until suitable persons could be found to place in charge of the Home.

In 1936 things started to move. Through a receipt of money from the Mission Board, final plans were approved to build a home capable of accommodating about twenty children and the family in charge. As you will notice in the picture on page 129, the building has three wings; one for the superintendent, one for the boys, and the other for the girls. Between these wings the dining room, the kitchen, and helpers' quarters are located. There are also a small cellar and a nice roomy attic.

The necessary equipment was installed, and in the first week of December 1936, the Shank family moved from Pehuajó to Bragado to take charge of the Orphanage. At last Israel entered the promised land! Of the original number, fifteen children remained to form the first family in our new and permanent home in Bragado.

From the very beginning it has been the purpose not to build an immense institution but rather provide, as much as possible, the environment which should correspond to a real home. All eat around the same table; the duties are divided; all are present for family worship; and even though the inmates come from different towns and have a varied and distinct background, they soon become united and appreciate each other as though they were brothers and sisters by blood. It should be stated here that while the Shanks had charge of the Orphanage, Brother Shank made weekly trips to 30 de Agosto and Tres Lomas which is 175 miles from Bragado.

The year 1938 was ushered in with the Orphanage machinery running smoothly and the family well established and busy. However, a dark cloud soon appeared on the horizon. Death visited the home twice during the year. First, Margarita Gallo passed away after a long and severe siege of typhoid fever and a little later Don Carlos, our old German gardener, took sick and died suddenly.

As the children grew, new problems arose. The older ones left the home or sought employment. Two were converted and baptized during the year. Others took preparatory studies for baptism. The activities of the year were more or less routine. The children's schooling, their work, crops, provisions for the winter, and discipline, all required attention and undoubtedly accounted for a few extra grey hairs on the heads of the ones in charge.

The year 1939 ushered in some more changes. The Swartzentruber family in charge of the work in Pehuajó prepared for furlough. Someone was needed to take care of this station. Sister Shank's duties at the Orphanage were too strenuous and exacting on her strength; so it was decided that the Shank family be moved to Pehuajó in charge of that pastorate.

Brother and Sister Ernesto Piñeyro, a young Argentine couple, were appointed directors of the Orphanage with the writer as administrator. The Piñeyros came in the month of March and in the month of April the Shanks moved to Pehuajó. It should be stated here that Sister Emma Shank's health was failing and on December 28 she passed away at the British Hospital.

The Piñeyros were in their twenties when they took charge of the Orphanage; in fact they still are at the time of this writing. He is a convert from the Trenque Lauquen congregation and she was converted in Carlos Casáres. Before marrying he had taken one year of Bible School work at Bragado. After their marriage they worked in Buenos Aires where we approached them and invited them to consider taking charge of our Orphanage family.

The adjustment was made very nicely and since then the Home has not changed officials. Of course it takes time to get into the swing of things. The problem of a gardener has also

been solved, we hope, for some time to come. As administrator I am happy to be able to say that we are well satisfied with Brother and Sister Piñeyro. In discipline they use good judgment; in living they are economical; they are quite ready to take advice and disposed to consult on any problem they may have. They place due attention on the spiritual side and needs and take time to give the children personal attention and advice whenever the case requires. Brother Piñeyro is calm and level headed and Sister Piñeyro, besides having other good qualities, is quite motherly with the children.

Much could be written on the finances of the Home. The truck farm has a good variety of products, cows, hogs, rabbits, chickens, bees, sweet potatoes, potatoes, pumpkins, peas, beans, peanuts, asparagus, peaches, plums, and so on. We have known abundance and we have had dry years, late frosts, grasshoppers, and hail. But by the grace of God and the monthly allowance from the brethren at home, our Mennonite Orphanage continues and tries faithfully to fulfill the mission for which it was established. As in all institutions we are sorry not to be able to report a one hundred per cent success.

Some of the children who have left have made men and women of themselves, are faithful to the church, and grateful to all who have made the Orphanage possible. Others, who for years have eaten at the same table and have received the same instructions in the same environment, just seem to be aching to be of legal age to leave and lose themselves in the wicked world which seems more attractive.

We appreciate Sister Isabel P. de Battaglia, who was brought up in the Orphanage; she is the wife of our printer in Trenque Lauquen. We praise God for Sister Elvira Armenino, frail, self-sacrificing, ambitious, who after finishing sixth grade, took some high-school work, finished the work in our Bible School, helped out in the Orphanage in the meantime, did mission work in the Carlos Casáres district, and in this year is finishing a three years' nursing course with a government diploma, which permits her to do nurse visitation work in any town or city of the Republic. She has plans under way to use her preparation for the benefit of the poor and needy people and for the advantage of the Mission and the cause of Christ without any extra de-

mands on the mission budget. Alba Acuña seems to be done walking on "Silly Street" and has settled down to give satisfactory domestic services in the home of a well-to-do family. She attends church regularly. Nirma Vecino never had more ambitions than to become a good hired girl, which service she is performing faithfully in a Christian home here in Bragado.

On the other hand Yolanda Ochatt had the best of privileges. She was reared in the home and enjoyed high-school privileges, but she became disobedient. She insisted on maintaining relations with young men who were not Christians and finally became so unruly that, in spite of what the juvenile judge told her, she kept on and had to be returned to her mother. Not only did Yolanda fail to make good but she is entirely ungrateful for the care and help that were given her when she was small and helpless and when her mother was a poor needy widow dependent upon others.

We might mention Rosa Vecino, who had an antimissionary complex, received probably through the influence of a disloyal native worker. Rosa at eighteen years was turned over to a family who promised to make a home for her. These people tried to make a home for her, sent her to school, gave her music lessons, and did all they possibly could to treat her as their own child. Rosa is now twenty-three and is about to get married. As this is being written, she threatens to sue her foster parents for 6,000 pesos, about $1,500, for domestic services. It is the most ungrateful act that we could imagine, but some unscrupulous lawyer may encourage her, and the foster parents as well as the Orphanage officials may have to appear in court and make explanations. Not all are as ungrateful as this one!

Carlos Acosta has made good as a tailor after a hard struggle to make "Fool's Hill." He has made the grade and is deeply grateful for the help which the Home has given him. He is a faithful Christian.

Others have been baptized, but circumstances and friends have influenced them, and they are not so true or grateful as we should like to see them. But the Orphanage is fulfilling its mission: "The poor ye have always with you." It not only opens its doors to the needy but is a silent witness to the critical, ungodly, suspicious, and hostile folks around us; it is a witness of

our good will, practical Christianity, and unselfish service in the name of Christ. The teachers and children from the National Normal School here in Bragado pay a visit once a year to the institution.

At least another paragraph should be added to complete this brief history of the activities of the Orphanage. Reference has been made on a former page to the fact that students of the Bible School have been given the opportunity to work on the Orphanage farm several hours a day and thus earn their board. This has worked out fairly well from the standpoint of the Orphanage as well as of the students. At least five students have availed themselves of this opportunity since the new arrangement was put into effect.

"He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." The Orphanage has had many and varied experiences. When the children respond and obey and are grateful, the workers naturally are optimistic. When, in spite of training, help, and advice, they fail to respond, but rather disobey and make the load heavier, then questions arise and the workers wonder if the investment was worth while. However, an unbiased judgment which takes into account the net results after a period of years must come to the conclusion that it is worth while and that our brethren's money which we employ every month to keep the institution solvent is after all a good investment.

## THE PRINTERY

Prior to the buying of the printing press, occasional articles appeared in our church papers telling us of the need. While Brother Hershey was at home on his first furlough, he received permission to solicit funds to this end, and friends of the mission contributed. Brother Hershey recalls with pleasure the visit he had with one brother and his wife, tithers, who contributed $1,700, the exact amount needed to complete the original amount set as a goal. The tither and his wife had purposed in their hearts to give that amount without knowing that this was the exact amount required to complete the work of solicitation. This surely was the Lord's leading and the Printery has proved to be a great blessing.

The committee appointed by our Executive Committee bought the outfit on February 18, 1927. Mr. Wetzel, a member of the congregation of Pehuajó at that time, a man with forty years' experience in printing, was our adviser in the purchase of our little plant. The press arrived in March and by April we were able to print the first number of *El Camino Verdadero* (*The True Way*). Ten thousand copies monthly came off the press regularly at first and this number has steadily grown to 17,000 copies a month in spite of the high price of paper and material due to the war. During the first year we also printed numerous tracts, the titles of which are interesting and suggestive of their nature; for example, "Faithful Followers of Christ"; "Do Not Stay Away From Church"; "Was Peter Pope?" "Why a Christian Woman Should Cover Her Head in Times of Prayer and Prophesying"; "Primary Course of Bible Study"; "Margaret Interprets Malachi 3:8-11"; "Young People's Meeting Topic Booklets as From 1928"; "Former Conference Reports in Booklet Form." Brother Hershey also translated into Spanish the *Eighteen Articles of Faith* adopted by the Mennonite Church of Germany in 1632, and translated into English in 1890. One thousand copies were printed in Spanish.

A paragraph in this write-up should mention the good will of the National Paper and Type Company in Buenos Aires. This is one of the leading paper, type, and machinery companies in the country. Mr. Schmidt, the manager, sold us the large press at a very reduced price. Later on he was consulted on the price of a smaller press for small job work; to our surprise he sent the press as a Christmas present.

By March 1932, in addition to our regular work, the first Mennonite Church paper in Spanish *La Voz Menonita* (*The Mennonite Voice*) appeared. Since its beginning, this monthly periodical has had Albano Luayza as its editor, and Brethren Hershey and Shank have been administrators at different times. It aims to be spiritually helpful to our Mennonite homes here in Argentina. It usually has some articles on doctrine, the home, a corner for children, a section for young people, and from all the congregations. The circulation has grown from 300 copies a month to over 500 copies a month. Another job done by our

Printery, which should be mentioned as a most useful service to our work, is the printing of 700 or 800 *Booklets* for our Young People's Meetings.

During the last year 2,500 new songbooks *Himnos de Alegría* were printed. This is songbook No. 2; No. 1, a smaller book, was printed years ago for use in our Sunday schools. Songbook No. 2 is a larger booklet without notes, for use in our Sunday schools and regular church services. It is a well-bound booklet of 157 songs and 54 short choruses. The wide range of selections in these songs include songs on Worship, the Bible, Consecration Hymns, the Cross, the Holy Spirit, Evangelization, the Christian Home, Jesus Christ, Missions, Nativity Songs, Prayer, Resurrection, Salvation, the Second Coming, Christian Service, Temperance, Temptations, and Eternal Life.

Thus the work of our Printery goes on. Sufficient has been said, we trust, for us to be able to appreciate the usefulness of this activity even though it gives Brother Hershey as administrator some headaches at times. Plans are under way to translate and print the book, *Menno Simons' Life and Writings,* by Harold S. Bender and John Horsch. Our press may not be large enough to handle this order of 1,000 books, but the Printery will take the responsibility of getting the work done. We trust that the Printery will continue to receive the full support of the brethren at home.

## THE CLINIC

So often in visitation work it has been the experience of the missionary to find sick people in dark, badly kept rooms without medical attention and no nursing care. Worse still the sick person may be in the hands of a quack doctor, or he may be a victim of some homemade remedies which do not alleviate the sufferer but rather give the disease time to make headway. Argentina has been a fruitful field for quack doctors, powwowing, and fads that prosper because of a credulous people. Poverty undoubtedly has contributed to this condition since many people are not able to pay the regular medical visitation fee. The local hospitals in the past have not always given satisfactory service to our own people. The hospitals are usually in charge of nuns of the Roman Catholic Church, and these are very in-

sistent that all patients confess to the priest and take mass. Cases could be cited of severe pressure being placed on sick people, of injustices committed and treatments given that are in no way conducive to regaining health and strength. Another interesting thing often takes place in the treatment of sick people. In spite of efficient medical care, sick people are often induced by well-meaning relatives not to take the doctor nor his remedies too seriously. Doctors lose interest in their cases when they discover the lack of obedience to their orders.

It is for such reasons that we have our clinic. This institution is more like a nursing home in which we can offer adequate nursing care to our own sick people who need such for any length of time. So far, the care given has been limited almost entirely to our own members. One of our widows, whose two children are interned in the Orphanage, has been sickly, and for two years was an inmate of a large hospital in Buenos Aires. She did not seem to improve. She was finally brought to our own "nursing home" in Pehuajó where she has improved very much and is able to help with some of the work. It was also our hope that by means of our "nursing home" we could train our own young women as nurses.

Recent Argentine legislation not only makes this impossible but also requires that our own North American trained missionary nurses must qualify through some courses or studies given here for a diploma before they can practice legally. For this reason we have recently started a Nurses' Training Fund. This fund helps our young sisters who are interested in nurses' training to attend the government institutions that will give them the needed training and diploma. We hope to be able to use these nurses to advantage for the cause of Christ in our local churches. All sisters who receive help from the mission to this effect sign statements in which on completion of their courses they give their services to the mission for a period of years or return the money as soon as they are in a position to do so. At present three young sisters are receiving help in this way and undoubtedly there will be more in the future.

In the meantime our little institution at Pehuajó seeks to enlarge its services not only to care for the sick inmates but also to minister in the homes and hospitals where such services

are possible. After our sisters have completed their various courses it is quite possible that we shall have a maternity home as well as a visiting nurse service. The visiting nurse will be able to visit all poor and needy homes and advise on all matters of food, health, and care, and at the same time present the Gospel. This is the primary and ultimate motive of all this work.

It may be added that when Argentine doctors became acquainted with the kind of nursing care we gave to the sick, they solicited the services of our missionary nurse. In spite of legal regulations on nursing, they offered institutional positions in the local hospitals. Our missionaries never felt justified in accepting such offers, but whenever possible our women helped to nurse individual patients in homes and hospitals. Argentine doctors have always co-operated with us. Poor patients in our clinic have been treated free by competent medical men.*

## THE OLD PEOPLE'S HOME

The problem of the Old People's Home is still in the committee stage. Thus far there has been a cash donation of five pesos (about $1.20 in United States money); about an acre of land was donated by Don Cosme and Doña Carmen Besoytaorube, the first baptized members at Bragado. There is, however, a most acute problem which must be solved sooner or later. In practically every one of our twenty-four congregations there are one or more aged persons, members of the church, who are without funds and are needy. Some of these are dependent on other church members or some unconverted relative who generally does not make life too pleasant for them. We are sorry to have to report that because of lack of funds and a suitable place, some of our old faithful members have had to apply to state institutions for admission, and after admission were obliged to confess and commune in the Roman Catholic faith. The Argentine churches are handicapped in this that they are able to finance neither the building nor maintenance of an institution for the aged. Different solutions have been suggested whereby help can be extended to our worthy aged but so far nothing definite has been done. We trust that before many years this problem may be well on the way to solution.

*This paragraph was added by Selena G. Shank.

CHAPTER VII

# PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION AND FINANCE

BY T. K. HERSHEY

Someone has said, and rightly so, that all mission work is more or less a constant change of policies. Missionaries, seeing their problems unsolved, sometimes temporarily adopt different resolutions only to abandon them after a given time. Conditions, locations, and policies of the government and of the people constantly create changes that result in doing and undoing and making and dissolving rules and regulations. If one experiment does not bring the desired result, a wide-awake missionary studies the problem from all angles and seeks a solution to it, even though this means a radical change of his own notion of how mission work should be carried on. It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to explain some of the problems of the Argentine Mennonite Mission and our attempts to solve them.

## Financial Help from the Board

First, it should be noted here that the entire force of missionaries, working in this great Republic, appreciate the financial help which the Mission Board has given to the mission in this country. Some crises have been passed through and the experience has been good for us. Other boards because of the financial strain at home were forced not only to curtail expenses but were obliged to close down stations and recall some of their missionaries. Our Mission Board, with the exception of a few times, was able to continue during these years to support in a most remarkable way their missionary activities in this land of the Southern Cross.

As we look over the records of the years that are now history, the missionaries unanimously extend their appreciation to the Mission Board for granting the annual financial requests, such as monthly budgets, missionary allowances, passages for

furloughs, funds for building, and the support of quite a large force of national workers. The latter are very grateful and appreciative of the financial help received, which has made possible the preaching of the Gospel in their country, the reading of the Bible in their homes, the caring for their orphans and needy, the printing of good, sound literature, and above all, the privilege of having the Bible in their possession.

However, in spite of all this generosity, there have always been problems that had to be faced, and efforts, whether wise or unwise, were put forth to solve them. Missionaries working in foreign countries strive to make their work self-propagating and self-supporting as rapidly as possible. This has not been overlooked by the Mennonite missionaries in Argentina. Due to the gradual increase of local contributions and to the possible continued increase in membership, as well as to the financial situation in the homeland, it was felt that some plan should be worked out by which the Argentine Mennonite Church could become self-sustaining. Consequently, it seemed that the time had come to organize an Argentine Mennonite Mission Board.

### *The Argentine Board*

A plan was first discussed in the 1931 annual Mission Council and later presented to the pastors at the annual conference. This resulted in the organization, as it would be called in English, "The Argentine Board of Evangelization and Finances."

A resolution passed at the 1931 annual Pastors' Meeting reads thus:

"Having received word from the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities of United States and Canada, that due to the financial crisis, it is impossible to increase the budget for expenses in Argentina, and very much to its regret, is obliged to send 10 per cent less than promised, and in consideration of the aforesaid word, we, the ministers, in session the 29th of January, 1931, in Carlos Casáres, having the idea of co-operating with the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, do resolve the following:

"1. To create in Argentina a committee of five ordained ministers which shall be known as 'The Argentine Board of Evangelization and Finances of the Mennonite Church.'

"2. It shall be responsible for administering the quota and funds that each church contributes to the treasurer of the Board.

"The members of this Board shall be nominated by the ministers in session in their annual meeting prior to the church conference and shall be elected by the conference.

"3. With the approbation of the ministers in session, the Board shall place all ministers and local workers and suggest the names of persons thought to be useful workers who have been recommended by any minister, and make such changes during the year that may seem necessary.

"4. It shall pay all allowances to workers who do not receive the same from the General Mission Board in United States.

"5. It shall increase or diminish allowances of all workers who do not receive the same from North America.

"6. The Board shall make the propaganda, as it believes opportune, and send representatives to co-operate with local ministers with respect to raising funds, thus enabling the Board to meet its obligations.

"7. The Board shall open all new work and have general oversight over all work now in operation.

"8. It shall direct and manage all special efforts of evangelization in the Church.

"9. It shall prepare a budget of expenses and quotas to be raised by each congregation, and present the same to the annual conference for its approval or rejection.

"10. All complaints of organizations, of ministers, workers or individual members of any Church should be made to this Board through the Secretary."

When the above was presented to the annual conference, there were no opposing votes, and all seemed to look upon the move as a good one.

The election of the first Board members resulted as follows: N. Litwiller, President; A. Luayza, Secretary; T. K. Hershey, Treasurer; W. G. Lauver, Pablo Cavadore.

Immediately, a budget was worked out and adopted. The Argentine Board was then functioning and had come to be looked upon as an essential part of the mission's organization. There were, however, situations that had to be faced. Two

outstanding ones were the world-wide financial crisis and the financial condition of the Argentine Mennonite Church.

## THE 20-YEAR PLAN

Consequently, after discussing the financial world crisis in their January 1933 Mission Council, the missionaries suggested a 20-year plan. It was presented to the Argentine Board and the assembly of ministers, and in April of the same year to the delegates of the church conference and finally to the annual conference. After a general discussion of the plan, it was unanimously accepted.

The Executive Committee of the mission named the writer, and the Argentine Board named Brethren Lantz and Luayza to form a committee to work out the details of the plan and to put it into action. After several meetings, this committee presented the plan in its final form to the congregations and it was to begin to function in July 1933.

The plan was that from this date on, the Mission Board in United States should deduct 5 per cent of the Argentine Mission budget, and annually thereafter deduct an additional 5 per cent continuing thus for twenty years. This meant that the Argentine Church would increase its budget 5 per cent each year for twenty years.

There was much enthusiasm about the plan. The missionaries felt that they saw an avenue for extension; that the 5 per cent that the Board should deduct each year could be utilized for this purpose. One national pastor wrote an article on "The Mother Church and the 20-Year Plan." He presented the argument that since the Mother Church in North America spends thousands of dollars to send missionaries here with the Gospel, the Argentine Church should heartily support the plan.

Another wrote on "The Argentine Board and the 20-Year Plan." He reviewed the two-year history of the Argentine Board and appealed to the church for support. He concluded his plea thus: "Mennonite Brethren, in particular, the Board is yours, you are the Church; the Church is of Christ and Christ is of God." Still another wrote an article on "The Argentine Church and the 20-Year Plan." He, too, appealed to the mem-

bers to contribute so that the plan would be a realization. A lay brother wrote a poem on the 20-year plan.

Without a doubt, the unanimously adopted plan was a good one and was workable for a few years, but it was perhaps a bit premature to load this responsibility and financial burden on the young church. Then, too, the long drought came and the people had very little money. There was not the increase in membership that we had hoped to see. People began to move to Buenos Aires in search for work, greatly reducing our membership; one church lost thirty members in one year in this way. Naturally, the churches could not keep up their quotas, and the people became discouraged. Our national ministers threw up their hands and declared that under existing conditions it was impossible to carry out the 20-year plan.

In spite of the crisis, dry weather, and discouragements, efforts were put forth to revive the plan and keep it going, hoping that better times were ahead; but after several years, it was decided to suspend the plan for an indefinite time.

Our national ministers felt that since the Argentine Board had no funds or not sufficient funds to carry on the original plan, that it should be dissolved. Accordingly, in the Pastors' Meeting of January 1939, it was decided, since the Argentine Board was handicapped in accomplishing the purpose for which it was organized, it was not necessary to continue for the present. A motion was then passed to suspend the Argentine Board for a year, and to appoint a committee to study the constitution of the Board in its relation to the other existing organizations in the Argentine Mennonite Church. Thus after seven years, the general management of the activities of the mission fell again into the hands of the Mission Council and the Pastors' Meeting.

It is the opinion of many that a similar revised organization can again be formed in the Argentine Mission. Eleven years have become history since the beginning of the Argentine Board and nine years since the 20-year plan came into existence. If Argentina would have had flourishing times then like there seems to be now (1942), the history of these two movements would doubtless be different. Lessons have been learned that are valuable, and in the future better and more thorough plans may be laid.

*Partial Self-Support*

It has always been the hope of the missionaries that it would not be necessary for the Mission Board in North America to continue sending to this rich country large contributions for the maintenance of mission work, and since it is possible to earn a good living here, it might be wise to introduce some partial self-support plan. It was agreed that, should this be workable, more national workers could be enlisted and work extended to adjacent republics with perhaps the same yearly budget.

The missionaries were aware that the original South American Mission Fund was contributed for the purchasing of land and for promoting industrial work with the view of partly supporting missions in Argentina. They decided to ask the Mission Board to grant a portion of said fund to launch a partial self-support program. On January 25, 1935, a resolution to this effect was sent to the Mission Board. After the Mission Board considered our plans, we received the information that as soon as money from the South American Mission Fund could be released, an amount would be sent for said purpose.

Later in the year, the money was received and a Partial Self-support Committee was appointed. The Executive Committee in a meeting in January 1936 decided to make a loan to the national workers who were willing to try to earn part of their living. Three of the pastors took loans as a tryout. Brother Luayza opened a grocery store in a large room in the corner of the mission home. Brother Cavadore rented and equipped a small truck farm and Brother Battaglia opened business with his brother in Trenque Lauquen. The arrangement was, that after a given time, each one should pay back monthly to the Partial Self-support Fund a stipulated amount until all the money borrowed should be returned. The two unordained brethren, Gorjón and Barbosa, preferred to wait to see the outcome of the others' experience before launching any business of their own.

This project did not work out as we had hoped, first, because of the inexperience of the men, and second, because of the long drought which produced crop failure and also the difficulty of collecting bills from business customers. Brother Luayza lost several hundred pesos because of the last-named condition. The

committee saw that in their struggle to build up a business these men could not give enough time to direct mission work. The attendance in their services, especially Sunday school, began to dwindle down so that by March 1938, it was obvious that the plan was not workable.

The missionaries believing that some helpful suggestion might be obtained from other denominations who had tried the Partial Self-support Plan, sent out a questionnaire to them, only to find that their experience was similar to ours. One said, "It is a good way to spoil a good preacher."

In an Executive Committee meeting on July 31, 1938, it was decided that because of these discouraging experiences with the Partial Self-support Plan, we should ask the pastors who were in business to abandon the same as soon as possible, and that the committee should co-operate with them in finding an honorable way to get out of business. Some of the money invested was returned, but it is needless to say that money was lost through the attempt to undertake what we had thought might be a good plan. The experience was valuable to all. We still hope that some farming project or other legitimate business might be worked out for the good of the mission.

## ROTATING BUILDING FUND

It was suggested that if a part of the original money raised before mission work started in Argentina could be set apart as a Rotating Building Fund, church buildings could be erected in our smaller towns. The plan was to establish a fund from which money could be taken to buy properties and put up buildings, and then to reimburse the fund by monthly payments as rent that would otherwise have had to be paid for such buildings to a landlord. The amount of the rent would go back into the fund.

In the January 1935 Executive Committee meeting, it was decided to send a request to the Mission Board for five thousand dollars for this purpose. The request was granted and the scheme proved to be a good one. As a result, properties have been purchased and churches erected in Quiroga, America, Pellegrini, Lonquimay, Villa Santillán, French, and Cosquín. A sum of about 400 pesos, formerly paid from the monthly budget for halls that were generally unsatisfactory, now comes

back into the fund, and while it is being paid, we have our own permanent places of worship. The Rotating Building Fund has proved to be the source of a special blessing to the smaller congregations.

### BISHOP ZONES

As the work grew and expanded, it became almost impossible for one bishop to fill his office efficiently and at the same time be a pastor of a congregation and a member of several committees. He could not visit all the congregations twice a year for baptism and communion. The ordination of the second bishop greatly relieved the situation. The entire district was then divided between the two bishops, making an eastern and a western zone. An imaginary line running north and south between Madero and Passo divides the territory. All the churches north and east of the said line belong to the eastern zone, and all north, south, and west of it belong to the western zone (see map on inside cover). These zones continued to increase in size. New towns which were added almost constantly, gave the two bishops too much work away from their own congregations.

### DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

A plan was then worked out to divide these zones up into districts with a superintendent over each one. Consequently in the eastern zone there are three districts, namely, Bragado, Carlos Casáres and Pehuajó. Bragado District comprises seven congregations; Carlos Casáres District, six congregations; Pehuajó District, four congregations.

In the western zone there are also three districts, namely, Trenque Lauquen, America, and Cosquín. Trenque Lauquen District comprises six congregations; America District, four congregations; Cosquín District, three congregations.

Besides these towns where there are organized congregations, there are a number of other towns where periodical visits are made. In order to relieve the bishops, some of their work has been delegated to the district superintendents. In a general way, the superintendent looks after the work in his district. Although this system has been giving good results and enables each district to be worked more thoroughly, some look upon it as not being the most ideal.

There is no danger that a district may become independent and introduce systems and doctrines not approved by the church in general. Each district is only one small community in the larger one, over which there is a bishop who is subject to the Mission Council, the Pastors' Meeting, and the General Conference.

Each district superintendent is to inform the bishop of the zone, to which his district belongs, of the spiritual development of the work. He is at liberty, with the workers in his district, to administer funds designated for his district, and with the consent of the workers he may locate or change workers in his district. This may also be done between districts by common consent of the superintendents concerned.

## MISSION COUNCIL

The Mission Council is a council of the missionaries. This Council has existed from the beginning of the work. The first two missionary families used to meet regularly for prayer and counsel and this custom has ever since been practiced. All missionaries appointed by the Mission Board become members of this Council upon arrival on the field. The Council meets once a year in a three or four-day session. When there is urgent business to consider, it will meet in a midyear session at the call of the president and secretary.

In order to attend to business between sessions of the Mission Council, there was for years an executive committee consisting of five or six missionaries. Since more executive and administrative power has been given to the district superintendents, there is at present only an intermediate, or managing committee, consisting of the president, secretary, and treasurer, elected by the Mission Council. This committee looks after the smaller but vital things and is considered a connecting link between the Mission Council and the Mission Board in North America.

By this recent change of administration, much time, energy, and expense are saved. For all special and unforeseen problems that may arise from time to time and that may affect the entire mission, special committees are appointed by the Mission Council in session or by correspondence.

## CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The mission has always operated on a budget system. In former years, the Executive Committee considered the financial needs of each station and then worked out a budget accordingly. With the dividing of the field into districts, the budget for each district is made out by its superintendent, who with his workers considers the needs of the district. The new mission budget is made out by the district superintendents in a joint meeting. The budget is planned for the mission district as a whole rather than for individual congregation or station.

The congregations used to send all their contributions to the conference treasurer or to the Argentine Board. The mission would then pay all municipal taxes, street light, garbage hauling, and general repairs of the buildings, including the church. It was discovered that the amount raised and sent to the treasurer or to the Argentine Board was about the same that the mission was paying for local expenses in the station. When this was observed, it was decided by the pastors in official session that in the future the congregations should administer all their local contributions, paying the local expenses that had heretofore been included in the mission budget. No congregation is obliged to send its regular contributions to the conference treasurer except just before conference convenes, at which time each congregation is asked to send an offering toward conference expenses.

Thus it may be seen that direct responsibility has been placed on the individual congregation, which must now see that all its own municipal taxes, repairs on church building, painting, and general upkeep must be taken care of. This places responsibility where it belongs. Local congregations are urged to work on a budget system, and many follow this plan. Some of our congregations are now paying, besides the expenses mentioned, rents and supplies for branch Sunday schools. The church members like this new system very well, and it has greatly diminished administrative affairs, reduced the expenses of the mission, and inspired churches in self-support and systematic giving.

## OUTSIDE MATERIAL AID

This chapter would not be complete if mention were not made of some outside aid which was given to our mission and which helped in a material way the extension of Gospel work in this country. We shall therefore consider a few of these aids.

### *Passes and Rebates*

The mission body has always been grateful to the Western Railway Company for their interest in our mission. From the beginning, this railway company granted a rebate of 50 per cent on all tickets purchased by our missionaries and workers, both men and women. Every missionary, and national worker, possesses a 50 per cent rebate booklet, which when filled out indicates whether travel is desired by first or second class. That means that the holder can go to any town on the western lines for half the regular fare. The company also grants 50 per cent rebate to our delegates to church conference, Young People's Retreat, or Institute, and to other religious meetings when there is to be a large representation.

This same railway company has granted free passes to a number of workers. These have been held by various officers of the mission such as chairman, treasurer, secretary, bishop, or financial agent and even for appointees such as visiting pastors or colporteurs. There is absolutely no way of knowing accurately what these rebates and passes have saved for the mission. We are safe to say, however, that thousands of pesos have been saved in this way, and at the same time we have been enabled to extend our work with increased rapidity and to keep down our traveling expenses.

### *Donations*

Other outside aids that greatly helped us in our first building program were the donations received from different sources. In 1923, when the first Mennonite church building in Argentina was put up in Pehuajó, the same railway company that so generously granted us rebates and passes, donated us 10,900 kilos of iron rails and sent them to Pehuajó from Buenos Aires free of charge. This donation was estimated to be worth about 900 pesos.

When the Mechita Church was erected, Mr. Roberts, then president of the Western Railway Company, personally donated 500 pesos toward it. He lived in Mechita at one time, and learning of our intentions of building, in a conversation with one of the missionaries, wrote a check for that amount. It should be said here that this railroad company, which has so generously contributed to our mission, is English owned. While few of their men attend our meetings, they sympathize with the evangelical movement in the country. This explains the reason for these liberal donations.

The Juan and José Drysdale Company of Buenos Aires, also an English firm, made large donations when we built in Pehuajó. Their donations were: a twenty-foot tower windmill with tank and pipe to convey water to the house and yard; 1,840 kilos of angle iron for the windows; 1,947 square feet of lumber and 35 barrels of Portland Cement. This entire donation including the windmill, was estimated to be around 3,000 pesos.

Besides these larger and more salient donations, many of our brethren and friends of the mission donated some time or material in the towns where the mission owns property. The mission gratefully acknowledged these outside financial aids because they were a saving of expense to the Board and the contributors have received blessings through their donations.

As we review the problems in organization and finances and consider how marvelously God has led in spite of apparent failures and financial losses, there is every reason to thank God and take courage for His divine guidance and material aid both within and without the church. As has been shown, on some occasions, money has been lost, but through careful and prayerful management and God-given wisdom in securing material favors, all the losses have been replaced many times over. For this the entire mission force praises our kind heavenly Father.

CHAPTER VIII

# THE MISSIONARIES

## EDITED BY ELVIN SNYDER

In presenting this chapter, the missionaries have no fond illusion of personal greatness or of historical importance. It is what we would call *la yapa** and, at least on our part, not entirely necessary. But it may be that through the years of interchange of "culture," this habit of asking for the *yapa* after you have made your purchase has also transmigrated to the northland. So, if you were asking for "something for nothing" in this book, this is it.

Nor have we found ourselves hard pressed to resort to self-praise in order merely to make a book of some size. But we have sincerely felt that this might help us all to know each other better; and especially since the missionaries on their furloughs have opportunities of becoming acquainted with so many friends, it was thought not more than right to let you become better acquainted with us. And lest curiosity become occupied in fabricating fables regarding the authorship of these sketches, let it be said in passing that none of the missionaries have written about themselves.

May this little register help those who have pledged themselves to the great prayer endowment plan to unite so definitely and personally with us at the throne of grace that God may be more perfectly magnified and celebrated in our hearts.

JOSEPHUS WENGER SHANK was born on October 10, 1881, near Versailles, Missouri. When he was a small boy, the family spent a few years in Florida. Later the family moved to Morgan County, Missouri, and finally to Palmyra, of the same state. It was here where he met Emma Elizabeth Hershey, whom he married on August 11, 1910. Their children are Elsa

*When children and people in general of the poorer class in Argentina buy something, they often ask for *la yapa* which means a little added present of more of the same article or something else like a cracker or a piece of candy.

Lois (Mrs. David Castillo) and Robert J., born in the United States, and Paul D., born in Argentina.

After completing the public school course Brother Shank took the Normal Course at Goshen College; he later returned for further study at the college until 1910 when he received the B.A. degree. During his second furlough he studied at Bethany Biblical Seminary of Chicago, completing the requirements for the B.D. degree in 1933.

Brother Shank served as teacher in public schools, high schools, and colleges and in the Bible Training School of our Argentine Mission. In 1911 he was appointed to make an investigating tour in South America. On his return, he visited the churches in the United States and Canada to give a report of his findings and to solicit funds with which to begin mission work in South America.

During the years 1913 to 1917 he was engaged in educational work in Colorado, Indiana, and Kansas. On August 16, 1917, Brother Shank with his wife and two children, accompanied by T. K. Hershey and family, set sail for Buenos Aires, Argentina, arriving on September 11, 1917. These were the pioneer missionaries of the Mennonite Church to Argentina. Brother Shank served as pastor at different mission stations, as teacher in the Bible School, and as superintendent of the Orphanage.

He is the author of several mission study books on South America: *South America, an Open Door; Glimpses of South American Life;* and *Our Neighbors in South America.* Because he is very systematic in his daily schedule, he is able to complete considerable desk work. Late in the year 1939, Sister Shank passed away leaving him alone at the task which she had shared with him for many years. On February 5, 1942, during his third furlough, he married Selena N. Gamber of Mount Joy, Pennsylvania.

EMMA ELIZABETH HERSHEY SHANK was born August 11, 1881, in Buyerstown, Pennsylvania. When about twelve years of age, her family moved to Palmyra, Missouri. She grew to womanhood at that place. At an early age she began to teach school and continued as a successful schoolteacher for eleven

years. She spent a few years at Goshen College, completing the junior college course.

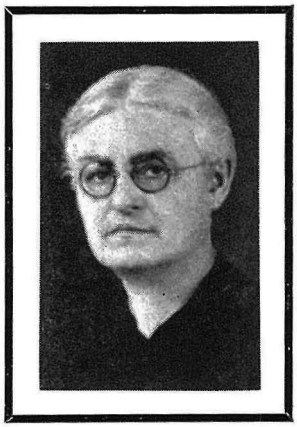
On her twenty-ninth birthday in 1910, she was married to Josephus Wenger Shank. The first year of their married life was spent in Hastings, Nebraska, where Brother Shank taught in a high school. Later, when her husband made an investigating trip to South America and on his return visited churches in interest of the work, Sister Shank remained with her parents near La Junta, Colorado, where she taught school.

In 1917, Brother and Sister Shank with their two children, Elsa Lois and Robert J., came as missionaries to Argentina. After being on the field a year and a half and before beginning actual mission work, Sister Shank had a severe siege of typhoid fever. Her life was in the balance, but the Lord answered prayer and saw fit to add a number of years to her useful life.

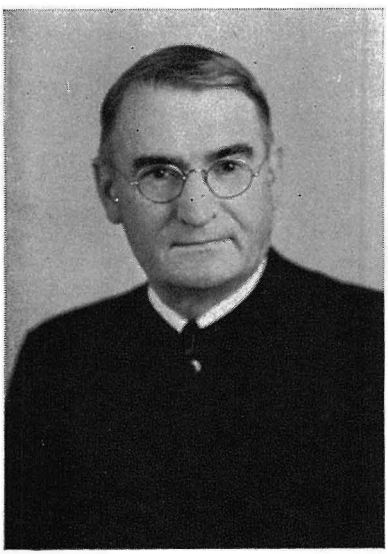
Sister Shank enjoyed home visitation and many times accompanied the Bible reader on her rounds. She believed much in the power of prayer. An incident that occurred in Trenque Lauquen might be mentioned. The family of one of the homes often visited decided to move to the country. The wife came to make her farewell. Before she left, Sister Shank had prayer with her and prayed especially for God's blessing on that home. Sister Shank did not live to see the fruit of this prayer since the Shank family moved away from Trenque Lauquen before the Marquez family moved into town again. But Mrs. Marquez gives her testimony that faith entered her heart at the time of that prayer and that she was converted from that moment and that from that time on, financial affairs ran along smoothly while prior to that time everything had gone the reverse.

Sister Shank did not enjoy good health for several years because of liver and intestinal trouble. From May 1939 on, her physical strength did not permit much active work, but she was always hopeful and cheerful. She requested anointing, after which she was able to teach her Sunday-school class of girls and take care of other duties for more than a month. In October of the same year, she took critically ill, and was taken to the British Hospital in Buenos Aires where her spirit took its flight December 28, 1939. Her remains were removed to Pehuajó and lie buried in the Pehuajó Cemetery.

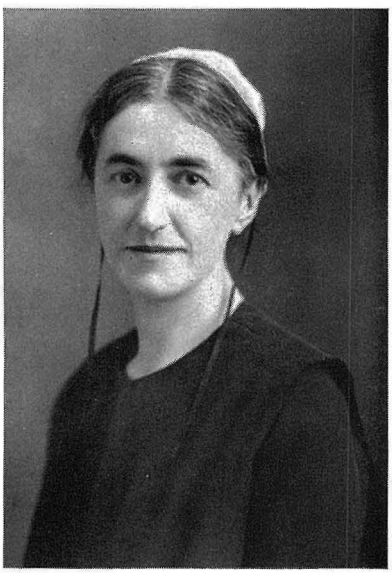
T. K. and Mae Hershey



Emma Hershey Shank (died in 1939)



J. W. Shank



Selena Gamber Shank

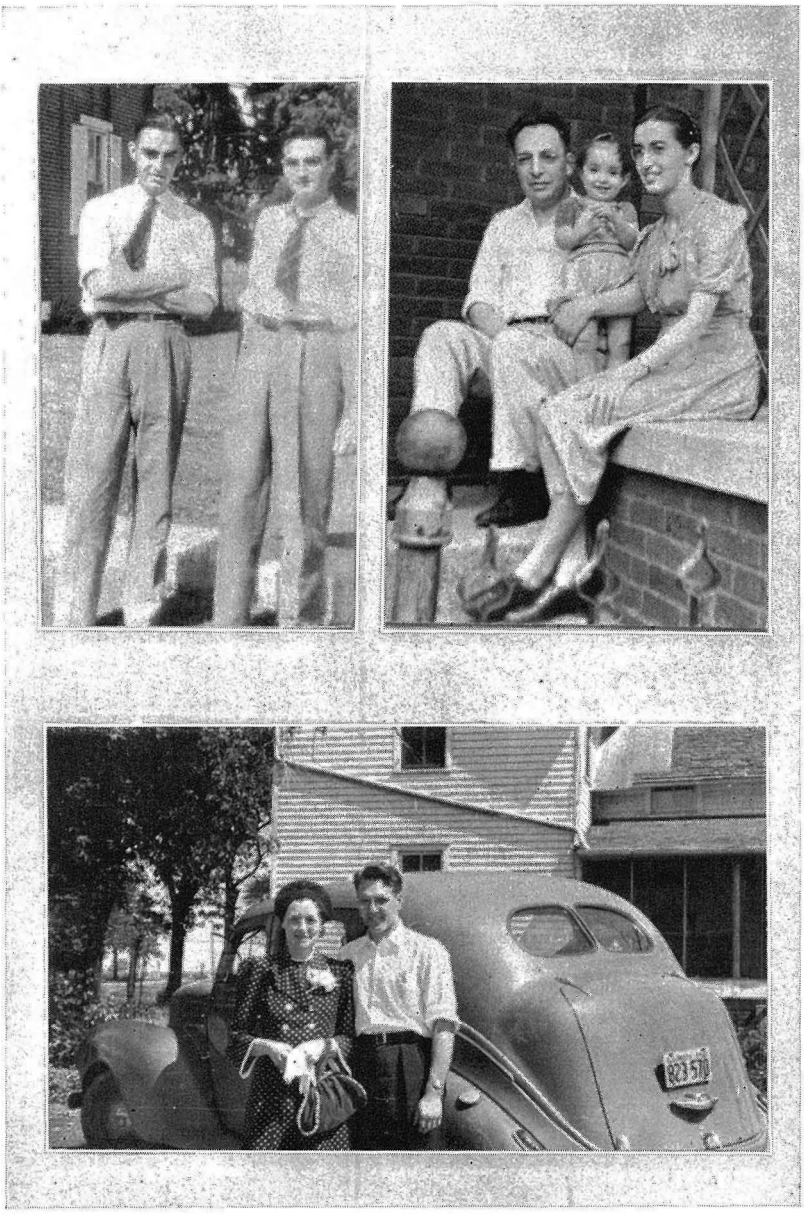
TOBIAS K. HERSHEY was born on a farm near the village of Intercourse, Pennsylvania, March 14, 1879. Here he spent his boyhood and youth. While yet a young man, he displayed interest in religious work in rural mission Sunday schools and in the North Street Mission in Lancaster City. After his marriage in 1904 to Mae Hertzler, he did not remain long in Lancaster County. Having entered Goshen College about 1907, he remained until he completed the academy course in 1911.

After this he spent four years in charge of the Youngstown Mission. While there he was ordained to the ministry in 1912. During those same years he gained experience as secretary of the Ohio Mennonite Conference. On account of trouble with his throat, he moved with his family to La Junta, Colorado, where his work in the open air brought about a complete restoration of health. This improvement placed him in a position to answer the call of the Mission Board to the foreign field.

From 1917 to 1942, excepting for time off on furlough, he has been an active missionary in the Argentine Mennonite Mission. For many years he has acted as chairman of the Mission Council and Executive Committee and since 1926 has held the office of bishop.

Brother Hershey's years of service have been full of activity as bishop, pastor, evangelist, building secretary, financial agent, manager of the printery, and in other duties that fall to any missionary. As financial agent he has shown himself capable of dealing with government officials and railway and municipal officials in legal matters pertaining to properties and to the official functioning of our mission. Not only has he had much to do in an official way in our mission but he was also sent on two special visits on matters of business to the Mennonite Colony in Paraguay.

Brother Hershey has shown himself especially capable in the management of the Printery and in the work of planning and carrying through of evangelistic campaigns. In these things he puts much energy and enthusiasm. His success in such work is largely due to his ability to get others to work with him. As bishop and minister he has always been deeply conscious of personal responsibility to God and to the churches.



TOP: Pablo and Robert Shank; David and Elsa Shank Castillo and little daughter
SECOND: Lester T. and Alta Hershey

MAE ELIZABETH HERSHEY was born December 22, 1877, near Concord, Tennessee. After completing her secondary education, she attended a Presbyterian college at Maryville, Tennessee, and also summer normals at University of Tennessee at Knoxville. After completing the course for the B.S. degree, she took her place in the schoolroom for some years. On December 27, 1904, she was married to T. K. Hershey after which she and her husband planned to settle in Pennsylvania. But other plans were in store for them.

The most noticeable characteristic of Sister Hershey from then on was the manner in which she filled the place of a true wife and helper, accompanying and helping her husband while a student in Goshen College, a pastor at Youngstown Mission, and while engaged in church work at La Junta, Colorado. She firmly believes that it was the Lord who led them to these different places. The work at Youngstown seemed to be the place where they wanted to be, but it turned out to be only a school of preparation for something else. In her own words we have her expression regarding the change from there to La Junta, Colorado. "I had no thought of leaving or wanting to leave . . . but as we started up the stairs, after our vacation, near the top step, a feeling overshadowed me as if someone were pushing me back and saying, 'You are not needed here. Your work is done.' From then on it was easy to go to La Junta."

It was while at La Junta that the first suggestion came that South America might be their future field of labor. She was ready at once to make the long journey across the sea. Thus it came about that for one fourth of a century the chief interest of her life has been the work in South America.

As a missionary she has always taken the work very seriously. What she considers her duty she will do, though the cost is great. She appreciates and insists upon a definite goal and a definite method of work which she follows conscientiously as long as no very definite conviction suggests a change. Her greatest success on the mission field has been in the supervision of the kindergarten and the Bible reading work. In the more recent years of foreign service she has given more attention to personal contacts with the people through home visiting.

Sister Hershey has always appreciated the significance of

the "call" to foreign service. She has keenly felt the responsibility of following her convictions. And she has been a most ardent believer in the necessity of doing one's duty in the task God has assigned. She is the mother of two children, Beatrice and Lester T.

DAVID PARKE LANTZ, one of our senior missionaries in Argentina, was born August 15, 1881. He pursued the studies of primary and secondary schools in his home community. As a youth he was early introduced to the occupation of clerking in dry-goods and grocery stores. It was in this capacity that he learned to deal personally with people of all classes, a very valuable training for his future work as a missionary.

At the age of fifteen he was converted and was later baptized at the Mennonite Church in Lancaster City. In 1908 he married Lillian F. Forrey. His first home was in Lancaster County. In 1914 he and his wife moved to Los Angeles, California, where for some years he continued his occupation as clerk in a large grocery store. But since his chief interest was in preparing himself for active Christian service, he with his wife entered the Los Angeles Bible Institute where, after three years of study, they were graduated. This was in the year 1919.

For a number of years he acted as superintendent of the Los Angeles Mission. It was while in that capacity that he and his wife were appointed as missionaries to South America. This was in fulfillment to a call that he had previously felt of the Lord for foreign mission service. The Lantzes arrived on the field in June 1921.

Brother Lantz has lived and preached in at least a dozen different towns in Argentina, leaving at each place a testimony of faithfulness and definiteness of purpose. He and his wife were cofounders of permanent work in Santa Rosa, Bragado, Ó'Brien, Mechita, Alberti, Cosquín.

At the close of their first furlough the Lantzes returned to the field by way of Spain, visiting while there some twenty centers of evangelistic work. During their second furlough in 1937-1938 the Mennonite Central Committee sent Brother Lantz to southern Spain as superintendent of relief work in that region.

Brother Lantz has an outstanding interest as well as ability in personal evangelism. It is his deep concern for the proper pursuance of this sort of work that has resulted in the leading of many a soul to seek personal salvation in Christ. This year Brother Lantz has completed twenty-one years of foreign service.

LILLIAN FORREY LANTZ was born November 1, 1883, in Rapho Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. She was the daughter of Catherine Nissley and Daniel Newcomer Forrey. She was converted in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and became a member of the East Chestnut Street Church of the same city. On November 10, 1908, she was married to D. Parke Lantz. They lived in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, until 1914 when they moved to Los Angeles, California, where they lived until 1921.

During their stay in Los Angeles, Sister Lantz enrolled in the Bible Institute of Los Angeles and became an ardent student of the Bible. Here Sister Lantz was a real "help meet" for her husband as they worked and studied to meet the requirements of the Institute.

In June 1921 Brother and Sister Lantz arrived as missionaries in Argentina. Sister Lantz has been happy in the work and in the land to which she has been sent. She is a prayer warrior, depends on the definite leading of the Lord, and spends much time in prayer and personal work. Handing out a tract is a pleasure. Sister Lantz is openhearted and frank and a great friend of children.

WILLIAM GRAYBILL LAUVER was born in Juniata County, Pennsylvania, on December 5, 1896. He grew up in a thrifty farming section where he learned the meaning of patience, frugality, and hard work. At the age of sixteen he united with the Mennonite Church and when only twenty-one was ordained to the ministry in the same church. This was on November 28, 1917. In September 1920, he married Florence Eyler of Belleville, Pennsylvania.

In less than a year after his marriage, he and his wife were called to become missionaries to South America. They arrived on the field in June 1921 and made their home for the first year

TOP: D. Parke and Lillie Lantz

SECOND: William G. and
Florence Lauver

RIGHT: Veronica (Vera) Hallman

in Trenque Lauquen. William was a good language student. Before the first year of study was completed, he had preached a number of sermons in Spanish. That put him in line for the opening of a new station in 1922 in the town of Carlos Casáres. He and his wife labored in this station for two full terms and were able during those years to build up a very good congregation.

Brother Lauver was often spoken of by the native people as *un pedazo de pan* ("a piece of bread"—meaning, a very good and generous man). They found in him one who was ready at all times to listen to them tell their problems and who helped them with sympathy and in a practical way.

While on his last furlough in 1940, Brother Lauver was the first superintendent of the Johnstown Mennonite Mission. Since his return with his family to Argentina, they have entered a new district near Salto, about 150 miles northwest of the city of Buenos Aires.

FLORENCE BYLER LAUVER was born near Elverson, Pennsylvania, June 2, 1894. From the age of four to twenty-four she spent at Belleville, Pennsylvania, in the beautiful Kishacoquillas Valley. She was graduated from Belleville High School. Later she took some work at a local school and at Millersville State Normal School in preparation for teacher's examination, after which she received a Professional Teacher's Certificate and taught country school until asked to help in the work at Altoona, Pennsylvania, Mission.

After her marriage to William Graybill Lauver in 1920, she still continued as a worker at Altoona for almost a year while Brother Lauver worked in the railroad shops. After this they were consecrated by the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities for service in Argentina, arriving in June 1921. During their second furlough, 1937 to 1941, she took college work at Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, and at University of Pittsburgh Extension in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. In the latter city, Brother and Sister Lauver were engaged in opening a new mission. They also did Gospel work among the Mexicans in that city.

TOP: Mary Lou, Glen, Elton, Lois, and Paul Lauver
SECOND: Ruth Eileen Rutt
THIRD: Clemens, Richard, and Elinor Hallman

Their five children, all of whom were born in Argentina, are: Lois Elizabeth, Jacob Paul, Glen Byler, William Elton, and Mary Lou.

Sister Lauver is an enthusiastic mission worker and has much faith in prayer. She takes charge of services in the outstations when necessary. An Adventist was led to the Light and to see the error of his way by Sister Lauver's untiring efforts.

AMOS SWARTZENTRUBER was born in Petersburg, Ontario, Canada, September 2, 1893. After spending his early years on the farm, he took approximately two and one-half years of study in Bethany Biblical Seminary, Chicago, in preparation for work in the church. On June 23, 1920, he married Edna Litwiller and together they took more Bible school work in Chicago. After spending some time in city mission work, he was ordained to the ministry in February 1924, at which time they sailed for Argentina. During the first furlough he took more studies at Toronto Bible College, Canada. During his second term of service in Argentina he was ordained as bishop. During his second furlough he was sent to Europe as Relief Commissioner, visiting England, France, and Spain with the purpose of organizing relief projects for refugees and war sufferers.

Brother Swartzentruber has been responsible in turn for other tasks aside from his regular work as pastor and bishop. He served for many years as mission treasurer and also as secretary of building operations. In the latter capacity he had charge of the construction of the orphanage and of a number of churches. Wherever he has worked as pastor, evangelist, or bishop, he has won the hearts of the people.

Brother and Sister Swartzentruber are now in their third term of service in Argentina and are stationed at Pehuajó.

EDNA LITWILLER SWARTZENTRUBER was born at St. Agatha, Ontario, May 22, 1901. In her early teens she was converted and became a member of the church. The great desire of her early Christian life was to become useful in the church. In order to prepare better for Christian service, she attended the Ontario Mennonite School and later was graduated from that

TOP: Amos and Edna Swartzentruber
SECOND: J. L. and Mary Rutt
THIRD: Nelson and Ada Litwiller

institution. In 1919 she studied at the Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago. During this time she fully consecrated her life to the Lord. On June 23, 1920, she was married to Amos Swartzentruber. With her husband she continued her studies at Bethany for a while longer. Later they established their home on a farm in Ontario, Canada. Here they quietly made their contribution in the work of the home church and Sunday school.

In 1923 they recognized the call of the Lord through the church to city mission work, and in the following year were called to leave that work to serve in the foreign field. She with her husband and Baby Doris sailed in February 1924 to Argentina. Here she revealed her capability as a faithful helper to her husband in his missionary responsibilities and an untiring worker in the interest of women and girls, always maintaining an ardent desire to help those under her care to a deeper, consecrated, Christian experience. She is the mother of three children; Doris, Amos Orley, and Anita Edna.

JACOB L. RUTT was born in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, on April 26, 1889. After graduating from the East Donegal Township High School in 1908, he took a two-year agricultural course at the Pennsylvania State College. On November 21, 1918, he married Mary Herr. Together with his wife he attended the Los Angeles Bible School during the years 1922 to 1924. He was graduated from this institution in 1924. During this same time he was a helper in the Los Angeles Mennonite Mission.

In January 1925 he and his wife sailed for Argentina. After studying the language in Carlos Casáres, they were stationed in America in 1926, although the work was not officially opened until January 1927. After spending their first furlough from June 1932 to July 1934 in the United States, they returned to the field and took up the work in Tres Lomas. In February 1936 they returned to America, in which town they are working at the time of this writing (1942). Even though their furlough is due at the present time, they have remained at their post because of war conditions.

MARY HERR RUTT was born April 21, 1892, near Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. She attended the public schools in Mt. Joy Township and graduated from the township high school. Later she attended Elizabethtown College. For a number of years she taught school in Mt. Joy and Conoy townships.

During the evangelistic meetings at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church in the winter of 1906, she accepted Christ as her personal Saviour. From the time of her conversion she always took a definite stand for her Lord, never willing to compromise or sacrifice principle, and she gave evidence that she was anchored on the Rock Christ Jesus. She always manifested a deep interest in souls and was happy when doing personal work.

She was married to Jacob L. Rutt in the fall of 1918. Several years later the Lord called them into full-time service. They entered the Los Angeles Bible Institute to prepare further for the Lord's work. After graduation they accepted the call to service on the mission field in Argentina, South America. They spent two full terms of service on the foreign field. Their second furlough is now past due, but on account of war conditions they prefer to continue serving on the field for the present time. During the period of service on the mission field she manifested strong conviction of the Lord's leading in His work. Her experiences on the mission field are strengthening the qualities of her early Christian life.

She became the mother of two daughters, Ruth Eileen and a little one who was called to be with the Lord before she became one year of age.

VERONICA (VERA) HALLMAN was born near Roseville, Ontario, April 28, 1894. She was converted and became a member of the Mennonite Church in 1912. She attended the Ontario Mennonite Bible School from 1914 to 1916. She continued her studies later in the Toronto Bible College, graduating from this institution in the spring of 1918. The following year she went to Hesston Academy and Bible School. She learned to rely upon the Lord to supply her needs during this period of her school life. In 1920 she had her first experience in city mission work in Kansas City under the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. The influence of the consecrated lives

of Brother and Sister Mininger, then in charge of the work, meant much to her spiritual life.

She had definite convictions to become a worker in South America and trusted the Lord to open the way for her. She was appointed to that field in 1923 and spent one term of service there. Her zeal and devotion to the cause of Christ were an inspiration to those with whom and for whom she labored. For about three years she served as matron of the mission Orphanage. Her jovial spirit and honest Christian character left a deep impression upon the children. Though unable to return at the end of the usual furlough period, her missionary spirit and interest in those she learned to love in Argentina continue. Many in that land have been inspired by her example and bear sweet memories of her acquaintance.

SELENA GAMBER SHANK, R.N., was born near Landisville, Pennsylvania, June 10, 1893. She had two brothers and three sisters. At the age of fourteen she was born again at the Philadelphia Mission. A great peace and joy came into her life and with it a great desire to tell others of this joy.

In 1916 she entered training in the Lancaster General Hospital and was graduated from the hospital and registered in the State of Pennsylvania in 1919. For several years she did private nursing and also spent a short time in the Orphans' Home at West Liberty, Ohio. The way then opened for her to go to the Toronto Bible College. She came a stranger but soon won her way into the hearts of the students as well as of the faculty. She proved her executive ability by serving on the students' cabinet. At the annual Thanksgiving at Markham, a neighboring church, she gave her first address on the topic, "Staying by the Stuff."

In the spring of 1923 she was graduated from the Bible College and then received her appointment from the Mission Board to go as a missionary nurse to South America. In August of the same year, she sailed, accompanied by Sister Vera Hallman.

As a nurse she found many opportunities of relieving the sick as well as pointing them to the Great Physician. During her first term of service, she visited the hospitals in Buenos Aires and studied the field as a whole to see if there might be a pos-

TOP: Elizabeth and Marion Snyder; Lawrence and Donald Holderman
SECOND: Carmen Grace Snyder
THIRD: John, Eunice, Esther, Beulah, and Lois Litwiller

sible opening for a clinic or training school for nurses. She had a vision of having a Christian hospital and training our girls to take charge.

While home on furlough she entered Goshen College and received her B.A. degree; then she went to La Junta, Colorado, where she was Superintendent of Nurses for four years. She then returned to the South American field ready to see "hope" become "sight." A clinic was opened. At present there are several girls in preparation. Sister Una Cressman, a nurse from Kitchener, was sent to assist in the work. A young man, a faithful Christian in the church of Pehuajó, has received his M.D. degree; so there may be a Christian hospital some time in the future.

In January 1942 Sister Selena came home for a short furlough and on February 5 she became Mrs. J. W. Shank. She with her husband returned, arriving on December 6, 1942.

NELSON LITWILLER was born in St. Agatha, Ontario, Canada, on February 16, 1898. He took his high-school work at the Kitchener and Waterloo Collegiate Institute from which he graduated in 1917. The next year he studied at Stratford Normal School and received his teacher's license for grade schools in Ontario in 1918. He taught school at Petersburg, Ontario, during the school year of 1918-1919. On April 23, 1919, he married Ada Ramseyer and in September of the same year they started school and housekeeping at Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago. After studying for one year, they were asked by the Mission Board to take charge of the mission at 720 West Twenty-sixth Street in Chicago. They lived at the mission from September 1920 to August 1921 after which they moved back to Bethany to dedicate all their time to studies. During their stay in Chicago their daughters Lois and Beulah were born. In the fall of 1924 they moved to Goshen, Indiana, and in June 1925, Brother Litwiller was graduated with a B.A. degree from Goshen College and a B.D. degree from Bethany Biblical Seminary. He was ordained to the ministry in June 1925 and in September of the same year he sailed for Argentina. On their first term of service they lived in Tres Lomas, Pehuajó, Trenque Lauquen, and returned again to Pehuajó. In addi-

tion to the pastoral work Brother Litwiller has given much of his time to the Bible School as director and teacher. On their first furlough they lived at Goshen and studied extra Bible courses and at the same time Brother Litwiller taught in the Bible department in the school year of 1933-1934. They sailed again for Argentina in November 1934 and have been stationed in Bragado where his time is divided between pastoral, Bible School, and Orphanage work. Even though their furlough is due, war conditions suggest that it is advisable to continue in Argentina for the duration.

ADA RAMSEYER LITWILLER was born May 18, 1900, in New Hamburg, Ontario, Canada. Early in life she became a Christian and united with the church. She greatly desired to become better acquainted with the Bible and to know more about its great doctrinal truths. In order to satisfy this desire she studied in the Ontario Bible School for several terms. On April 23, 1919, she was united in marriage to Nelson Litwiller. During the following five years she took time out of her busy home life for part-time studies at Bethany Biblical Seminary of Chicago. For one year during that period she and her husband were in charge of the Twenty-sixth Street Mission. In 1925 they were appointed as missionaries to South America. They sailed to their field of labor in the fall of that year.

Sister Litwiller became the devoted mother of five children: Lois, Beulah, Eunice Arline, John Timothy, and Esther Ada. Her faith and courage in trying and discouraging times stimulated those same characteristics in those who surrounded her. Her responsibilities at home have always been heavy but she did not limit her activities to these alone. Her presence is often seen in other houses helping other mothers in their problems and in women's meetings giving courage and new hope to women and girls.

ELVIN VALORES SNYDER was born on April 1, 1900, on his father's homestead on the banks of the Grand River, near Breslau, Ontario, Canada. His early life as chore boy and later as general farm hand helped to prepare him for the varied and sometimes unpleasant tasks on the mission field. He went to the

old school on the hill near his native village, and later continued his education in the Kitchener High School; he also attended the Ontario Mennonite Bible School for several sessions.

His higher education consisted of a three-year course at Toronto Bible College, some postgraduate studies at Wycliffe Seminary in Toronto, and a complete college course at Goshen College, from which he received the B.A. degree in 1927.

During parts of 1927 and 1928 he served in the city mission at Canton, Ohio, as a part-time worker. The other part he spent in a shoe store. The year 1928 offered three special experiences to the subject of our sketch. On June 28 he married Mary Adah Fretz; later in the year he was ordained to the ministry, and he also received his appointment to the foreign field in Argentina.

After arriving on the field in November 1928, he with his wife studied the Spanish language and almost immediately took charge of the Orphanage, which at that time was located in Trenque Lauquen. He served as superintendent of the Orphanage until about the middle of 1932. From there they were sent to America station where they labored until January 1936. After spending a few months in Bible Coach and evangelistic work they went on their first furlough in April 1936. On returning to the field in November 1937 they moved to Carlos Casáres where they remain at the time of this writing (1942).

In addition to general missionary and pastoral work, Brother Snyder has contributed to the literary phase of the work. For a number of years he was in charge of the young people's section of the *Voz Menonita,* and since 1938 he has directed a very interesting page for children. Since 1939 he has been the editor of our propaganda leaflet *El Camino Verdadero,* as well as editor of a mimeographed circular for our workers called *El Pastoral.* He has taught in the Bible School during 1931, 1938, and 1942.

Whenever there is some hard and serious work to be done, we can call on Brother Elvin, and if anyone has need of a bit of cheering up, his dry humor is always at our disposal to drive away the gloom. His contribution as a chorister has done a great deal to increase the appreciation of Gospel hymns and four-part singing in the Argentine churches.

Top: Elvin and Mary F. Snyder
Second: Elsa Shank Castillo
Third: L. S. and Edna B. Weber

MARY ADAH FRETZ SNYDER was born on the beautiful farm of her parents near the town of Markham, Ontario, Canada, on March 13, 1903. At an early age she expressed her missionary spirit in the home, church, and community. Her experience in practical nursing in the home served as a preparation for her care of the Orphanage children later on in Argentina.

She studied at Goshen College and at the Toronto Bible College and graduated from the latter institution during her furlough in 1937. During 1926 she was a consecrated and devoted worker at the Toronto Mennonite Mission. On June 28, 1928, she was married to Elvin Valores Snyder, and in the fall of the same year she with her husband answered the call as missionaries to Argentina.

Almost immediately she became matron of the Orphanage in Trenque Lauquen, which was no easy task while taking the course in language study. During their stay at the Orphanage, Marion Ozias was born, also Byron Christian, who came to stay but a few months. From 1932 to 1936 they were in charge of the America station at which place Agnes Elizabeth came to gladden their home. In April 1936 they went on their first furlough, staying with her parents near Markham. During this period her aged father passed away.

Returning to Argentina on their second term of service in 1937, they moved to Carlos Casáres where they are located at the present (1942). On October 1, 1941, their second daughter Carmen Grace was born. Since the organization of the Women's Charity Circle, Sister Snyder has been the secretary of the organization.

In the person of Sister Snyder we observe a devoted mother, an exemplary wife, and an efficient and intelligent missionary. Her love for the beautiful has found expression not only in the bright flowers of her garden, but also in changed hearts and transformed homes under her ministry of love.

LEWIS SHANTZ WEBER was born in a beautiful farm home October 8, 1894, near the town of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Among his youthful occupations were such highly educational activities as delivering milk for his father's dairy and later selling dry goods in M. C. Cressman's store in Kitchener. In

1918 after graduating from Goshen College Academy he was ordained to the ministry to serve in rural mission work at Elmira, Ontario. Besides this work he helped in young people's activities, also in the Markham district, until 1921.

On June 14, 1922, Brother Weber married Edna Bowman, after which they took charge of the work at the Mennonite Gospel Mission in Toronto. During the nine years of service at this place Brother Weber found time to continue his school work, receiving a diploma in English Theology at McMasters University in 1926, the B.A. degree from Goshen College in 1927, and he was graduated from the Toronto Bible College in 1931.

Then another leaf of history was turned over and he and Sister Weber were appointed and sent to Argentina in November 1931, where they have been happily engaged in preaching the Gospel ever since, except for one furlough in the homeland. They have had their share of moving about from one station to another, taking charge of the work as needs and circumstances arose. They served in Pehuajó, 1931-1935; Alberti, 1935-1937; Cosquín, 1937-1939; Buenos Aires, "Parque Chacabuco," 1941 to the present, 1942.

As for special capacities Brother Weber has proved himself an interesting and inspirational writer, being author of *Ideals for Christian Youth,* editor of *El Camino Verdadero,* 1937-1938, and director of a devotional section of the *Voz Menonita* called *"El Santuario."* He has taught a number of courses in our Bible School in Pehuajó in 1932 and in Bragado in 1935, 1936, and 1942.

During their furlough May 1939 to November 1940, Brother and Sister Weber had the privilege of visiting a number of missions in several other of the South American countries. These visits are always useful in broadening one's vision and usefulness in the work. A part of this furlough was also spent in postgraduate work at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Since returning to the field in 1940, Brother Weber has the privilege of holding the funds of the mission as our treasurer. He is an agreeable and wise counselor as pastor, missionary, and committeeman; he is also talented and artistic as a preach-

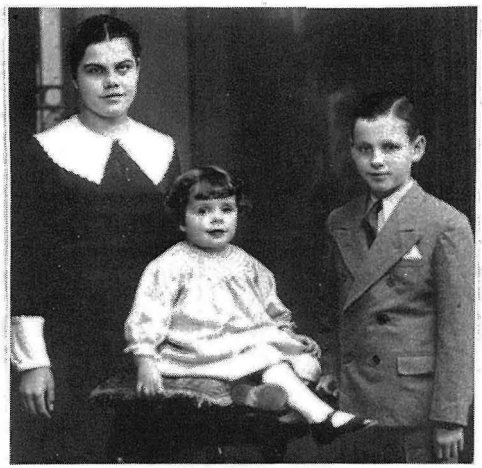
er, teacher, song leader, writer, and translator. He can be serious, sensible, and humorous, as the occasion demands. Brother Weber is indispensable where duty calls.

EDNA BOWMAN WEBER was born at Berlin (new Kitchener), Ontario, Canada, May 21, 1896. Her early youth was spent at home. Later she attended Goshen College and was graduated from the academy in 1921. After her marriage to Lewis S. Weber on June 14, 1922, she was engaged in active church work, being called to the Toronto Mission immediately. It was during her work here that she continued missionary preparations, taking studies at Toronto Bible College, finishing the postgraduate course in 1925.

Later the church called for their services to the foreign mission field. Brother and Sister Weber sailed for Argentina on November 19, 1931. Their continued loyalty to the Lord's work and faithfulness in service have been shown in efforts spent at the various stations during their first term of service, besides several months of experience with the Bible Coach before taking their first furlough. During this time, Sister Edna studied at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. Upon their return to the field, the mission asked that they take charge of the opening of a new work in the city of Buenos Aires. This is progressing nicely under their consecrated witnessing for Christ among isolated members from the country and among the sick in the hospitals and in evangelizing their immediate community.

ELSA LOIS SHANK CASTILLO, the only daughter of J. W. and the late Emma Shank, was born at La Junta, Colorado, June 1, 1911. When she was only five months old, her father left for his investigation trip to South America. Her preschool years were spent in La Junta, Colorado; Goshen, Indiana; and Newton, Kansas with her parents and brother.

Elsa's primary school education began, after coming to Argentina with her parents, at the American School for Girls in Buenos Aires. All her common and high-school studies were taken in Argentina except three years of grade work taken while on furlough in the United States. She completed her col-



TOP: Doris, Anita, and Orley Swartzentruber
SECOND: Patricia and Donald Brenneman

lege course at Goshen College, continuing Bible studies at Bethany Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Illinois. It was while in this city that she helped in our Mexican Mission, which was opened shortly before. It was also while at Chicago that Elsa became acquainted with David Castillo who was superintendent of the Mexican Mission.

Her devotion to the mission cause and faithfulness in Christian life marked her character during this youthful endeavor both while under the parental roof or away at boarding school in her native or adopted countries. These characteristics won her many friends among Christian and non-Christian people.

In 1935 she was appointed as missionary to Argentina where she spent two and a half years at Tres Lomas Mission. Due to her mother's ill health the missionary group advised her appointment to the Orphanage at Bragado where her parents were in charge. The following May 1938 she sailed for the states in view of her proposed marriage to Brother Castillo of Chicago. From that time to June 1941, she and her husband worked together at the Mexican Mission in Chicago. It was during this period of work that their daughter Emma Anita was born. In July 1941 they were transferred to the charge at the newly opened mission to Mexicans in La Junta, Colorado, where they are laboring wholeheartedly at the present time (1942).

WILLIAM ELI HALLMAN, son of Bishop Eli and Melinda Bowman Hallman, was born on January 29, 1904, in Kitchener (then Berlin), Ontario, Canada. In 1906 he moved with his parents to the province of Saskatchewan where his elementary education was begun and later continued in the Fifth Street School in Goshen, Indiana, after moving to this place in 1911. During the sojourn of the family in the states of Alabama and Louisiana, his high-school studies were begun and later continued in Saskatoon, after moving back to Canada in 1921. In September 1924 he entered Goshen College to finish his academy training, and continued in the college to graduate with the B.A. degree in June 1929.

He gained a valuable experience in dealing with people by selling books for a Philadelphia Bible house, and organizing

and training other salesmen for the same company. For three years he was a representative in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, of the International Correspondence Schools of Scranton. Three summers were spent selling dairy equipment and refrigeration in the same county. All of this experience was a good background for pastoral and personal work.

He married Beatrice Hershey, the only daughter of T. K. and Mae Hershey. She was in the party when our first missionaries came to Argentina.

At the annual Mission Board meeting at West Liberty, Ohio, in May 1937, he was appointed with his wife for mission work in Argentina. After an extensive trip visiting the churches from Texas to Alberta, and from this point to Pennsylvania, they sailed from New York on October 23, and arrived at Buenos Aires November 10, 1937.

Brother Hallman is still on his first term of service, all of which he has dedicated to the towns of Tres Lomas and 30 de Agosto where the work has flourished under his direction.

BEATRICE HERSHEY HALLMAN, only daughter of Bishop T. K. and Mae H. Hershey, was born May 11, 1906, at Gap, Pennsylvania. She was first a farmer's daughter and later a missionary's daughter when her parents initiated their missionary efforts at the Youngstown, Ohio, Mission. Common school studies started there were continued in various states until her parents took up the marvelous work in Argentina. Beatrice was only eleven years of age when she came with her parents and her brother Lester to Argentina the first time. Her grade school education was completed in Pehuajó, followed by some high-school work at Ward Institute, Flores, Buenos Aires. Her later education was at Goshen College and Academy in 1925. While taking her college course at Goshen, one summer was spent among the Cheraw, Colorado, Mexicans. This experience furnished excellent background for her future missionary endeavor. Her preparation for life was continued when she took up the Y.W.C.A. Practical Nurses' Course at Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

On October 18, 1931, she was married to William Hallman. For this occasion her parents were not privileged to be present.

Her interest in the Lord's work steadily grew. At this time they took up residence at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, until 1937 when their spiritual services were initiated in the foreign field. Clemens Lester, their first son, was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Two other children, Elinor Elizabeth and Richard William, were born in Argentina.

Today we prize Beatrice and William's consecrated services on the Argentine Mission field. They have been stationed at Tres Lomas where they are working faithfully and cheerfully for the Lord.

TIMOTHY H. BRENNEMAN was born October 7, 1905, at Elida, Ohio. He was baptized and received into the Mennonite Church in 1920. He was graduated from Sugar Creek Township High School, Gomer, Ohio, in 1923 and from the Allen County Normal School, Lima, Ohio, the following year. The next eleven years found him behind the desk as a teacher in the Allen County public schools. During this time he attended Ohio Northern University three summer terms and also studied in the Ohio State University extension schools.

He married Rowena Leedy May 3, 1928. He is the father of two children, Patricia Ann, age ten, and Donald Leedy, age eight, both born in North America. In his home church he was active in all phases of church work, serving as Sunday-school superintendent, teacher, chorister; and organizer and superintendent of the first summer Bible school in the community.

He entered Goshen College in the fall of 1935 and was graduated with the B.S. degree in education in 1937. In the year of 1937-1938 he was a postgraduate student and laboratory assistant of biological sciences, receiving the B.A. and Th.B. degrees in 1938. During the three years at Goshen he served as the superintendent of the North Goshen Sunday School, secretary of the College Y.M.C.A., president of the Peace Society, and he took active part in intercollegiate debating

In June 1938 he was appointed as missionary to Argentina. On September 11, 1938, he was ordained a minister in the Central Mennonite Church by Bishops S. E. Allgyer and S. C. Yoder. He arrived on the mission field in December 1938.

Top: Wm. E. and Beatrice H. Hallman
Second: T. H. and Rowena L. Brenneman
Third: Una Cressman

ROWENA JESSE LEEDY BRENNEMAN was born July 24, 1906, near Lima, Ohio. She is a grand-niece of the pioneer Mennonite evangelist, J. S. Coffman. At the early age of nine she was baptized and received into the Mennonite Church. In 1924 she was graduated from Sugar Creek Township High School, Gomer, Ohio, but her bright aspirations of future training in one of the church schools had to be abandoned because of ill health.

Early in her youth she felt the conviction of direct Christian work. Her contacts with many of the missionaries, friends of her Aunt Anna Stalter, a former missionary to India, who would visit in her home, served only to strengthen this conviction. She was active in religious and missionary activities in her community and had her first experience in teaching a Sunday-school class at the age of sixteen in a mission Sunday school about eighteen miles from her home. She also organized the first junior sewing circle in her home congregation.

She was enrolled in the short Bible term at Goshen College in 1927. On May 3, 1928, she was married to Timothy H. Brenneman.

She with her husband organized the first summer Bible school in their home community in 1935 and also served as instructors in the Kitchener, Ontario, Bible School two summers.

In 1936-1938 Sister Brenneman with her husband were enrolled in the Bible School of Goshen College, during which time she also served as teacher and helper in visitation work in the North Goshen Sunday School; as a teacher in the primary department of the College Sunday School; and as a teacher in the summer Bible school for two terms.

In June 1938 she was appointed, with her husband, to Argentina as a missionary, arriving on the field in December of the same year.

CALVIN LAWRENCE HOLDERMAN, R.N., was born near Nash, Oklahoma, January 12, 1907. He spent the first seven years of his life on the prairies of several different western states, living a short time at the place of his birth, then at San Antonio, Texas, and later at Corpus Christi, Texas. At the age of seven his parents moved to Brandon, Colorado, where he attended

his first school, walking two and a half miles across the prairie to the schoolhouse. He learned to take for granted the hardships of a family of homesteaders on the western Colorado prairies.

Later the family moved to La Junta, Colorado, in order to be near a Mennonite Church. It was there that Calvin accepted Christ as his personal Saviour at the age of eleven years. Three years later he was employed by the Mennonite Hospital at La Junta as janitor while at the same time he attended school. After finishing the seventh grade he went to work for his uncle in Newton, Kansas, where he stayed one year. He left this work to enter Hesston Academy to prepare himself for Christian work. By borrowing money and working during odd hours, he graduated in 1928. He then taught in the public schools of Colorado for five years showing his interest in the spiritual welfare of his pupils by holding Sunday school in the school building with the permission of the school board. During these years of teaching he continued to prepare himself by taking correspondence and extension work from Colorado State Teachers' College at Greeley, and by attending the premedical school of Boulder University.

At this time another denomination offered to pay his expenses through medical school if he would consent to go to Africa as a missionary under their board. Not willing to leave the Mennonite Church, he entered the nursing school of Bellevue Hospital, New York, with the purpose of earning his way through medical college. While in New York he attended Calvary Baptist Church where he met Frances Leake, who later was to become his wife. Upon graduating from the nurses' school he was married and with his wife entered Goshen College in order to secure more adequate Bible training. While in the college, they were called to serve in the Argentine field. Shortly before sailing in February 1940 he was ordained to the ministry by Bishop Allen Erb. He is the father of two sons, one of whom was born in the United States and one in Argentina.

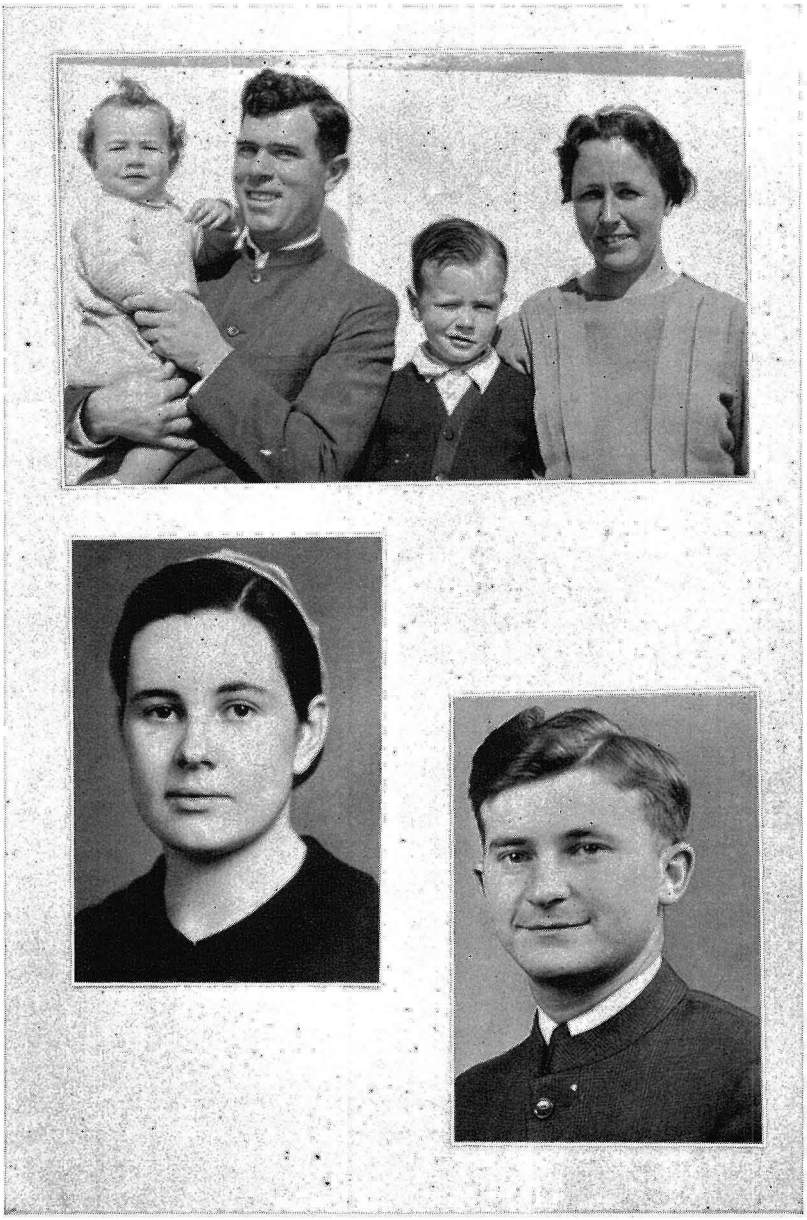
FRANCES LEAKE HOLDERMAN was born July 28, 1913, in New York City. Later her parents moved to River Edge, New

Jersey, where she spent her early days. She graduated from Hackensack New Jersey High School in 1931. She always had an interest in teaching school. She attended the Jersey City State Normal School for three years, graduating in 1934. Before graduating she received her teaching position in Hackensack where she taught three years. From childhood she attended a Congregational Church and later the Baptist Church in Hackensack. She was converted at the Pinebrook Bible Conference in 1934, at which time her life was dedicated to the Lord's service. In 1935 she was received as a member into the Calvary Baptist Church in New York City. Accidentally in one of the church services she met Calvin Holderman of La Junta, Colorado. Their friendship culminated in marriage on May 20, 1937. To Bishop J. A. Heatwole of La Junta, Colorado, she made known her desire to become a member of the Mennonite Church and after receiving the instructions as to membership was received into the La Junta congregation.

She and her husband attended Goshen College and were graduated in 1939 with the B.S. degree in education. In the same year she was appointed as missionary to Argentina and arrived on the field in company with her husband on March 12, 1940.

UNA CRESSMAN, R.N., was born at Berlin (now Kitchener), Ontario, Canada, July 25, 1905. She is a member of the Kitchener congregation. Her early school days were spent in a country school near her home where she learned to speak English for the first time. Her grim determination and perseverance coupled with a keen desire for a high-school education led her to enroll in the academy of Goshen College where she was graduated in 1931.

The vision of the nursing profession dawned upon her during her sister's illness whereupon she entered nurses' training at the Mennonite Hospital and Sanitarium, La Junta, Colorado, finishing the course and receiving the R.N. degree in 1934. She was busily occupied in private-duty nursing in Kitchener, Ontario, from 1935 to 1937. During her nursing career she felt a definite conviction to serve as a missionary nurse to South America and to prepare herself further she spent a year in



TOP: C. L. and Frances L. Holderman, Donald and Lawrence
SECOND: Samuel E. and Ella Mae Miller

Goshen College, 1937-1938. She was appointed missionary to Argentina in 1939 and arrived on the field March 12, 1940.

SAMUEL EBERSOLE MILLER, son of preacher David Z. Miller, was born December 27, 1917, near Middletown, Pennsylvania. In his youth he joined the Mennonite Church and became a member of the congregation which his father serves as pastor. He secured his high-school training in the Eastern Mennonite School, Harrisonburg, Virginia, graduating from the academy in 1934.

While still very young, he manifested an interest in mission work and served as a Sunday-school teacher in the Steelton (Pennsylvania) Mennonite Mission from its beginning in 1935 until 1938 when he left his home community to secure more adequate training. It was in this mission that he first came in contact with Spanish-speaking people. During these three years he worked on his father's farm and also found time to complete a year's work in the extension school of Elizabethtown College. In the fall of 1938 he enrolled in Goshen College. During the three years of study there he was actively engaged in the religious activities of the students, serving as president of the Y.P.C.A. during his senior year.

A month before graduating he was appointed as missionary to Argentina. On June 9, 1941, he received the B.A. degree and on the following day he married Ella May Weaver. A part of the following summer he spent in the home of his wife's parents, and on August 23 he was ordained to the ministry by Bishops Milo Kauffman and Harry Diener at the Pleasant Valley Church, Harper, Kansas, the home congregation of his wife. On October 24, 1941, in company with his wife he sailed for Argentina arriving on the field on November 11, 1941.

ELLA MAY WEAVER MILLER, daughter of Preacher R. M. Weaver, was born May 22, 1915, at Harper, Kansas. She is a member of the Pleasant Valley Church of which her father is a minister. She attended the Academy and Bible School at Hesston, Kansas, graduating in 1935. She always had a keen interest in the work of the church and served in various capacities in her home congregation and elsewhere. She manifested

her sincere interest in mission work by her faithful service in the Kansas City Mission from September 1935 to May 1937.

In the fall of 1937 she entered Goshen College to secure a more adequate training for direct Christian work. She graduated with the B.A. and Th.B. degrees on June 9, 1941.

During those four years in college she took an active part in all the religious activities of the campus. She served on the Y.W.C.A. Cabinet and was a member of the Bible Circle and of the Foreign Missions Fellowship. She also taught in the North Goshen Mission Sunday School. On June 10, 1941, she was married to Samuel E. Miller. She was appointed as missionary to Argentina in May 1941, and she with her husband arrived on the field on November 11 of the same year.

CHAPTER IX

# REMINISCENCES OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

## EDITED BY ELVIN SNYDER

In foreign mission work a missionary learns to expect almost anything! It would not be mission work if it were not so. Apparently there are no set rules which control human conduct to the extent that certain given factors always produce the same given results. What follows, as you will see, naturally wouldn't fit in anywhere, being snatches of experiences across the years without connection one to the other and unrelated to the methods or organization of the work.

The wisdom of this chapter consists in that which one can learn from the experiences of others. If it is true that life is made up of one interruption after another, it should also be remembered that often those same bothersome instances form one opportunity after another to grow spiritually, and also quite frequently to give a testimony for Christ.

### His First Prayer

After coming to the field, we try as comfortably as possible to apply ourselves to the study and application of the new language. So after several months of talking with both hands, feet and face, one begins to feel as though what he has to say were quite important. Sometimes it is!

But the thing that taxes one's intelligence (and pride) most is to try to pray in a foreign language. That night I listened very attentively to the sermon which certainly did not merit any definite chastisement. But at the close of the meeting I felt something like a cold electric shock when Brother Hershey asked me to close the meeting with prayer! I don't remember much about that worship hour, more than what they told me afterwards. I had prayed that the Holy Spirit might *die* in our hearts! (The verb "to dwell," is *morar;* "to die," is *morir.*)—E. V. Snyder.

### A SLIP OF THE TONGUE

It happened before the opening session of an annual conference. While the delegates and visitors were arriving, a native pastor asked a missionary how he with the group from his town had been able to arrive so early since the train was not due until later. Here I must explain that in Spanish there are two words very much alike in form but very different in meaning, *camión* which means truck, and *camisón* which means nightshirt. Unfortunately except for the entertainment of the bystanders, the missionary used the word with the letter "s." "We all came in a nightshirt," is the translation of what the missionary replied.—L. S. Weber.

### HOW TO GET YOUR GOAT

While visiting in a country home in the hills of Córdoba, we sat in the kitchen explaining a passage of Scripture which we had just read. Suddenly a nice white goat presented itself, or herself, at the door, and one of the children exclaimed, "Mother, here comes the baby's milk." The goat had heard the whimpering cry of the baby a few moments before and came running to make her contribution. Instead of milking the goat and feeding the baby from a bottle, the mother held the baby below the goat at an advantageous angle where the little one helped itself without the bother of bottles, nipples, and sterilization. When my wife and I showed surprise, the mother said, "I know that it works, because my oldest children are twins, and I raised them in this way sixteen years ago." The subject drifted to the richness and creaminess of goat's milk, and before you could count to ten one of the girls had milked half a mug full and offered it to us. It would have been rude to refuse it, but in passing we would say that we have not taken any of the precious fluid since then.—L. S. Weber.

### THE TREND OF "INJUSTICE"

In one of our small towns a young man who attended the mission services told this exciting story. He had a chum who had been working in a store as clerk for a number of years. When it was discovered that he was robbing the firm of some of its money, he was dismissed from his post without being

asked to make good what he had stolen. This dismissal made him so angry that he at once plotted to kill the proprietor and burn his store. He sought the help of his chum to carry out this horrible project and even threatened to shoot him if he would not help. The plan was to call at the house of the storekeeper on a given evening, shoot him, and burn his corpse by setting fire to the building. His young friend having presence of mind promised to accompany him on the appointed evening.

In the meanwhile, however, this friend confided the whole plot to the merchant who in turn told the police. When the two young men arrived at the merchant's house, two or three policemen were waiting to arrest the youth of murderous intents. He was taken into custody and the tragedy was avoided. The strange outcome of the affair was that since the father of the imprisoned boy had a political pull, which is common here, in a short time the culprit was released. Consequently the young man who had revealed the plot to the police had to flee to unknown parts in order to save his life. Such is the trend of justice, or shall we say of injustice, in this land where the very mention of capital punishment is horrifying, and yet where the individual becomes the perpetrator of outlandish barbarities.

—L S. Weber.

## DISPOSING OF USELESS BAGGAGE

During our ministry in the province of Córdoba, it was our privilege to make weekly visits to Santa María, one of the largest Argentine institutions for tubercular patients. Here we found believers and interested ones from all parts of the Republic, including many nationalities: Argentine, American, Australian, Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Welsh. Many of these were separated from all their loved ones by many miles. What a blessing and joy we experienced among these suffering ones under the favor of the Lord. Believers were encouraged; new ones became interested in the Gospel, and a number showed marvelous manifestations of conversion.

One young lady by the name of Argentina, who formerly was a staunch Roman Catholic, became interested in the Gospel through tracts which a Christian girl in the same ward had

given her. Through personal contacts and the reading of the New Testament, she was led to Christ and experienced a wonderful transformation after which she was fearless to witness for her Lord and Saviour. She went to the sanitarium with a small suitcase full of pictures of saints and images and other things to worship. After becoming a genuine believer, she disposed of all this useless baggage. She was glad to suffer all opposition caused by her conversion because she possessed a deep inward peace and joy which nothing in the world could take away from her. The nun said that her new attitude was caused by the devil, and that she would lose her soul. Smilingly she told them of her peace with God, of the deep joy in her soul, and of the preciousness of the Word of God in giving her a wonderful consolation in the midst of her suffering. Her body gradually became weaker but her faith was firm and steadfast in Christ and His Word until the end.—Edna B. Weber.

### AN AMBASSADOR INTERCEDED FOR US

When a number of women had been converted in a large tubercular hospital in the hills of Córdoba, opposition also presented itself on the part of the nuns in charge of the women's wards. One day I was encountered by the superior sister who accused me falsely and threatened to speak to the director to prevent any further visiting. It is inconceivable that a person wearing a religious garb should manifest a cruel and ungodly spirit. When I noticed three different nuns watching me as though I were a criminal, I surmised that there was hostility awaiting me. The *superiora* was so hot and antagonistic that it was useless to talk to her. It was only the grace of God that enabled me to be calm and courteous in the face of such lies and insults. Among the things she said were that I was to blame that many women stopped going to confession and communion, and refused to worship the virgin like they used to; that I had made much propaganda and had influenced them into a wrong religion; that we Protestants had no right in coming to this country and to this institution since they, the Roman Catholics, have sway here; and so on.

We knew it was a Roman Catholic country, and that is why it is badly in need of the true Gospel of the living Christ. We

prayed much for the Lord to reopen the door that had been shut into our faces, and we also made an appeal to the British Ambassador to help restore to us our rightful privilege. Official matters in Argentina move so slowly that a number of months passed before anything was done about the matter. When we were about to leave this district, the permission came to return to this visitation work. We are glad to say that the present workers are allowed to visit freely in this institution.

—Edna B. Weber.

## IN THE POLICE STATION

It happened in Rio Cuarto, province of Córdoba, north of Buenos Aires. C. F. Yoder, missionary of the Brethren Church, was in charge of the mission in this town and sent one of his helpers, Juan Barrio, to the cemetery to distribute tracts. I was there as a visitor and accompanied the helper. "A queer place to distribute tracts," you will say.

November 1 and 2 in Argentina are known as All Saints' and Day of the Dead. People go to the cemetery the first day with flowers to decorate the graves; the second day, the priests go to offer prayers for the dead. On the latter day, hundreds and hundreds of people go to see and to be seen and to pay the priest for his services of saying a few words in Latin and throwing a little holy water on the graves, thus assuring friends that their dead are getting out of purgatory.

It was on the second day that we had our experience of being marched to jail. The cemetery was filled with people and a great many priests were receiving money for their services, enriching themselves by their false practices and deceptions. The scene was too much for Mr. Barrio; so he opened a conversation with one of the priests, who became very angry. Soon a large crowd gathered around us; some were hooting at the priest and praising Barrio. This encouraged the latter and angered the former so much the more.

Seeing that the people were with us, Mr. Barrio attacked several other priests who could not defend their doctrine or practices. With Bible in hand, Mr. Barrio showed them that they had no power to get souls out of purgatory, a place that does not exist. Once in such a discussion, the priest became very

angry and thundered away at Barrio, and used language not very Christian for a leader of people in religious matters. I tried to take a picture of the show, but the crowd pushed us almost upon the scene, and I was so close that all I got was a big head which was that of the priest.

The final showdown came when Mr. Barrio began his discussion with what was evidently the head priest. This one did not argue with us, but called a police and ordered us to be taken to the police station about two miles away in the city. As we passed through the entrance of the cemetery, we were examined to see whether we might have arms. We gave the policeman a tract and said that was all we had. The police then rode his horse and we followed in Mr. Yoder's sulky, singing hymns. Now and then the police looked back and smiled. On both sides of the road there were hundreds of people going to and returning from the cemetery.

On arriving at the police station, Mr. Barrio was placed in one of the cells, and I was sent to call Mr. Yoder, who when he came explained that we were simply stating the doctrine of the Bible. Whereupon, Mr. Barrio was called and after some further proof that we were harmless, we were set at liberty.

At eight o'clock in the evening, Mr. Barrio was preaching on the street corner, much to the surprise of many eyewitnesses who had been in the cemetery as well as to the priests who were returning to the city and thought that we had been placed under lock and key. This experience resulted in very good advertisement for the mission and its work.—T. K. Hershey.

### FIRST EXPERIENCE SELLING BIBLES

On our return to Rio Cuarto from the North, Brother Shank went to Buenos Aires by way of Carlota and I stayed a few days longer. It was then that I had my first experience in selling Bibles. I accompanied a young man who after much talking and explaining sold three Bibles and two New Testaments. Following are some of the excuses or answers we heard: "Money is my god; that is enough for me." Another, "We must have images through which to worship God." Another, "Wilson is my God; I will do as he says." A priest said, "You are condemned; you are condemned." A man said, "I don't like

the Bible; I like mate better" (mate is an Argentine tea). A woman said, "My mother taught me all that I need to know." Another woman said, "I know the Bible by memory. I have it all in my head; I do not need to buy one." At that time I wondered what my experience in the future would be trying to place God's Word in the hands of the people. After nearly twenty-five years I find it has been similar. One priest cried out, when one went to ask his advice as to reading the Bible, "Poison! Poison." Then he brought a newspaper and carefully covering the Bible with it, picked it up with thumb and finger and gave it to the inquirer to carry it thus to the woman who had sent it, with orders not to read it as it was poison; a book of the Protestants. Many similar experiences could be given.

—T. K. Hershey.

### SUITCASE ROBBED

In 1918 when Brother Shank and I were looking for a possible place to establish our work in Argentina, we arrived on October 3 in the city of Córdoba. We checked our suitcases in the station and started out to visit mission workers in that city. On returning a few hours later, we found to our surprise that mine had been opened and nearly everything of value had been taken, shirts, hosiery, handkerchiefs, underwear, duster, field glasses (a gift from friends at home), and all the films of pictures which had been exposed elsewhere. In all I had been robbed of about thirty dollars' worth of personal property. We did not have as yet a fluent speaking knowledge of the language, but for a few minutes I almost had "the gift of tongues." I jabbered away at the employee, who I decided received the suitcase, but I do not yet know whether he did not understand our Spanish or did not want to. We even complained to those who understood our mother tongue, but to no avail. There was no way to find the thief.

Referring to my diary, I find I wrote the following on that date: "After a good bed to sleep in, I arose at five-thirty and wrote to the manager of the railroad company a letter explaining and describing every article taken. I am feeling rather blue this morning, especially when I think of the articles that were taken."

TOP: The Hersheys and Shanks in 1917, just before sailing for South America; S. C. Yoder visits Argentina in 1940
SECOND: Carlos Cavadore, first to be baptized in the Argentine Mennonite Mission; New York, October 1937, on board *American Legion,* seeing off the missionaries
THIRD: Missionaries and children, 1930

You ask, Why was this allowed? The reason was made clear to us years afterwards that Rafaela, Córdoba, was not the place God wanted us to establish the Mennonite Mission in Argentina. The pictures stolen were to accompany articles to the Mission Board with this in mind. Man proposes, but God disposes.—T. K. Hershey.

## THE BALKY HORSE

Our first meetings in Pehuajó were initiated, but we were foreigners, heretics, Protestants, despised, hated folks. We prayed that something might happen to create confidence. It did.

I was in my study when I heard a man outside using hasty language and whipping a balky horse. I went out and demanded that he should stop his cruelty to the horse. Yet I was a Protestant and a foreigner. The man threw down the lines and said, "Well, if you can make him go, do it." I answered, "Yes sir; I'll make him go." Now, that was a daring statement, although I had had considerable experience with balky horses. I did not know that the whole thing was of the Lord.

I began by petting the poor, sweated horse on the head and stroking him on the breast. This he liked and soon put his head down so that his nose almost touched the ground. The man angrily said, "Well, make him go; I'm in a hurry." "Have a little patience," I answered. I quickly picked up some sand and threw it into the horse's ear. He began to shake his head and forgetting all about his balkiness, plunged forward and was off. The man picking up the lines looked back and waved good-by. Not to my recollection, did I see that man afterwards. Now, you will say, "How was this of the Lord?" Here is the answer:

At the other corner of the street, two girls were looking over the high wall that enclosed the laundry where they were working. As they were looking, they were wondering whether the Protestant could make the balky horse go. When they saw him go, they said, "Surely, God is with the Protestant, for he made the balky horse go." They had attended our services, but needed something to create confidence, and making the balky horse go did the work.

At that time I did not know that they were watching me, nor did I know that those two sisters were to be in our first class of applicants for baptism in the Mennonite Church in Argentina. Neither did I know that both were to be our first Bible readers, one of whom has given all her time to the Lord's work for more than twenty years. Neither did I know at that time that one of their brothers was to be one of our most faithful Argentine pastors. I did not see then that their father and mother and eight children would become members of the Church. But this was the result, and it took a balky horse to create the necessary confidence.—T. K. Hershey.

## A WOMAN OF THE HILLS

Doña Claudia, now nearing seventy-five years of age, left the handmade stone hut in the hills, her goats, some of her chickens, and the only spot in the world that brought her joy because her lifemate had been called home. We took her home to Cosquín with us. She had only a trunk, a few boxes, her bed, and some chickens.

Town life was something new for her because for many years she had lived in the rocks and the shrubs of the Córdoban hills. She was alone, and for hours she would sit and watch her chickens. She told us of their dispositions, their desires, and their characteristics as though they were her own children. Early in the morning we could hear "peep, peep" and we couldn't imagine from where it came.

One morning I took back to her room some fresh hot bread and to my surprise found old Doña Claudia with a baby chick in bed with her; our cat, too, had found someone more affectionate and was also helping to keep her warm.

The nice kitchen provided for her use was not to her liking but a little charcoal fire out by the chicken yard proved more comforting. Still she longed to go back to her hut and her hills.

After a month of town life her adopted son, Pedro, decided to rent a room nearer the hills where she perhaps would be able to live outside more and have her animals. It seemed lonely to us but proved to be too near town for her. The day before Pedro was to be married, she decided to be of less expense to

him, and now one can find her again after six months of discontentment, alone among the rugged hills, happy again to be in that one-room stone hut made by the hands of her beloved many years ago. A woman of the hills she is and cares to be until the Lord, her Saviour, calls her home.

—Calvin Holderman.

## THE SMILING FACE

José was a sick tailor who had come to Cosquín to be cured of tuberculosis, but his life was changed. He was only twenty-seven when we met him, but one could tell from his drawn face that he had lived for years in sin and now tuberculosis was calling his active, worldly life to a halt. In Cosquín he received injections daily from a young practical nurse called Anita. He had noticed that she had a face that beamed, a cheery smile, and a hopeful word when she entered the room where hope was failing. He caught her spirit, and started a battle for his health. He wanted what she had, our Saviour, and His unfailing love.

On the days that he had the strength to attend the *Culto* he did so, but all was foreign to him. He had always sneered and he could hardly believe that he himself was listening to the Gospel, singing the hymns and rejoicing in it. The Lord touched his changing heart but his body was already wrecked by sin.

However, Anita too rejoiced to see him happy and gallantly fighting and they decided to fight the battle together. With prayer and care he was able to open a tailor shop where one could see him working many hours a day. They were married one summer day, and she was to help him in all ways possible, for she was a seamstress and a nurse.

The Lord, however, thought it best to give him a chance to testify to many, and the sickbed was the place in which he was baptized, from which he sang those grand hymns of faith and told of his blessed joy in his Saviour. After steadily failing for a time he was called home to his heavenly Father exactly two months from his wedding date. Anita remains alone again, but praise is on her lips that her José had come to know the Lord before it was too late.—Frances L. Holderman.

## THE YOUNG INDIAN CONVERT

Don Mario was born in the province of Corrientes, his parents being Indians of the Guaraní Tribe. Since they were very poor, their principal food and drink were *galletas* (hardtack) and mate topped off with an occasional native wine. This way of living was conducive to all manner of diseases, malarial fevers, and resultant disorders. Mario because of asthmatic attacks was seeking relief, taking many kinds of remedies but never finding a cure. At last his folks paid his fare to the hills of Córdoba where he found congenial friends who, like him, had to scheme in order to keep alive.

While unable to be about, a neighbor girl took him something to eat. When Mario proposed marriage, she consented. She did washing and ironing for a living. Mario played a guitar at balls, dances, festivals, and serenades. A friend suggested that he could be relieved by a "back-to-nature diet." That helped but did not cure him. About this time he received a bunch of tracts which interested him so much that he went to a street meeting. The singing and speaking caused him to decide to go to the mission and learn what the Gospel is.

On that Sunday morning the door was open early. Don Mario stood at the gate and clapped his hands. When I answered, he told me that he had listened at the open-air meeting and had come to learn more of the Gospel (*El Evangélio*). He was soon converted, and after studying the lessons for converts he was baptized. His wife, whose friends and folks live in Cosquín, did not repent until this year and now she also desires baptism. They have adopted a nice little orphan girl named Elba and are endeavoring to bring her up according to His Word.

Don Mario is preparing himself for a worker, as his great desire is to return up North to his People, live among them, and teach them the Way of eternal life.

Will you, dear reader, pray for Don Mario and the Guaraní Indians, who need the salvation as much as you or I?

—D. Parke Lantz.

## AT THE FOOT OF THE VOLCANO OSORNO

We were passing through the beautiful lake district between Argentina and Chile. It had all been wonderful until that day crossing Lake Todos los Santos when there came a tremendous rainstorm. Safely at Port Petrohue, just at the foot of the volcano Osorno, we found ourselves stranded. "No bus could ever cross those terrible washouts," they said. We jammed ourselves into a little restaurant where we got hot coffee and sandwiches. Four hours later a truck was chartered to attempt to cross the washouts. Baggage and passengers were piled onto the truck with no seats and no protection from the rain and mud; we simply stood holding to the sides.

The first three or four washouts seemed dreadful—deep ravines, raging torrents of water, great rock boulders, gravel, and mud. Somehow we got across all of them. But when we got to the big washout, about 60 yards wide, the truck driver stopped short. We stared in astonishment. Such a dreadful place! Would any driver be so wild as to go down into that furious, rushing torrent? Those tremendous boulders so close together! Those yard-deep ravines! Those treacherous patches of soft mud and gravel! Imagine a truck turning over in such a place. But this was our only chance to go forward. There was no hotel near where we might pass the night. To go back to the hotel across the lake was almost a day's journey; that was unthinkable.

Finally the truck was started. The first dash down the four-foot embankment left most of the passengers sprawling on the floor of the truck. Nor could those who had fallen get up because the jolting across the boulders and washouts continued. Furthermore, it was pouring rain again, and we had no protection. After what seemed a half hour of jolting and tumbling we reached the other side and were transferred to the waiting bus. Was there ever a seat in a bus so cozy and delightful after that ride in the truck?—J. W. Shank.

## ALL MISSIONARIES ARE NOT DOCTORS, BUT—

It was at the mission in Pehuajó at about 10:00 P.M. Brother Lantz and I were quietly visiting after the evening service when

a neighbor woman came in great excitement telling us that Doña María Petrella and her mother had fallen suddenly seriously ill. "You must go quickly," she said.

We hurried away and upon arrival found both women lying unconscious, each on her separate bed. Everything possible was done to revive them to consciousness. This required the greater part of an hour.

When the daughter finally came to herself and saw the house full of people, she was greatly mortified. She kept saying: "What a shame! What a shame! What will people think of us?" We could get nothing more out of her until after most of the people had gone away. Then she told her story something like this:

"You know my father died recently. Well, just the other day a man was here who told us that he has known many cases in which upon the death of one of the family, the spirit of the dead person comes back to the house in the form of a dog, a cat, or a bird. Then this evening when we were sitting at the table after supper, and the door was open, a strange dog came from somewhere and ran under the table against our legs. The first thought was that Father's spirit had come back in the form of this dog. We each gave a scream; then both of us fainted. Now you know our story. There is nothing more."

Doña María has put away her foolish superstitions now. For many years she has been a faithful member of the church.

—J. W. Shank.

## AN EXPERIENCE WITH THE SICK

One day word came that Sister Boyero was very sick and that they thought she would soon pass away. I went at once and found her telling her unsaved children and their companions to accept the Lord as their Saviour. She wanted me to read Romans 5 and that was her testimony, "Being justified by faith, *I* have peace with God through *my* Lord Jesus Christ." We prayed and then began to sing softly some of the hymns she loved. She helped us sing, but finally her voice could not be heard, but we saw her lips moving; she was helping us sing in a whisper. After a little while her eyes closed and she was gone to be with her Lord. It is a blessing that these people have found

the truth in Christ so that they can pass through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil because He is with them.

At the bedside of another lady who had heart trouble she told me the following, "O Sister Lauver, I am not at all afraid this time. Before I was converted when I had a heart attack, I was so afraid of death. This time I prayed and many of the Scripture texts which I had learned came to my memory to comfort me." She passed away with a happy testimony to her unsaved family.

A Mr. Soso's last words to his wife and daughter were, "Good-by, I am going with Jesus and will meet you in heaven." What a joyful meeting it will be in heaven when we can see all these dear Argentines who have been saved through Jesus' blood, because the Christians in North America made it possible for them to hear the message of salvation before it was too late.—Florence B. Lauver.

### GOD'S PROTECTING HAND

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7). It was a dark night and I was alone in the house with Sister Pilar and the children. We never had an experience with robbers although some other missionaries had. At one time money, a watch, and a plain coat were stolen! I had imagined that if a robber would come, I would be terribly frightened, but when I passed through the experience, I was not so much afraid. I was up rather late since the next day was Sunday, and I was preparing a talk for the Sunday meeting in case Brother Swartzentruber could not come, for Brother Lauver was away.

Suddenly I heard a noise at the window and I thought it was our dog and was about to open the window, but instead I called and told him to go away. I then turned off all the lights and saw a tall man walking around in the yard and pushing at the windows. I could see him without being seen.

Finally I wakened Sister Pilar. We called the police station, and the police were soon there. They hunted everywhere in the yard and outbuildings. The neighbor's dog was barking and very much excited. The police could not find the man, but the next day the neighbors said that they could see where he had

hidden in their kitchen when the dog barked. Later he crossed several lawns and went out a hallway on the other side of the block. The owners found their outside door opening onto the porch had been unlocked from the inside and left open. We were thankful for the telephone and especially for the Lord's protection. The remarkable part was that the man tried seven of the eight windows of the house, and the only one which he did not try we found was open. It opens like a door and with a little push he could have stepped right into the office, and we could not have reached the telephone. The Lord knew which window was open and saw to it that the man did not try that one. David said, "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in," and "He shall neither slumber nor sleep."

—Florence B. Lauver.

### AN INTERRUPTED BAPTISMAL SERVICE AT TRES LOMAS

Many of you probably recall reading about the farmer, son of Holland Protestant parents, who after forsaking black magic and experiencing the new birth became violently insane shortly afterwards. We praise the Lord for miraculously healing him!

His Argentine wife of Spanish descent is of a different mind. She is a pleasant woman, nevertheless sparks can fly from her jet-black eyes as her mouth twists into an ugly line and her tongue loosens up. She is not a Catholic, for her father is the head of a spiritualist cult. When she is with us, she seemingly enjoys the Gospel.

The time came for her husband's baptism into the church, Leaving his family with a friend here in town, he came to church. She had always threatened to upset the services if he were to be baptized.

Suddenly: "What a man! What a father! To make us walk so far through these dusty, sandy streets. Baby is sick from heat. Didn't want us to come to church? I'll report him. Wants to be baptized, eh? He better take care of his family first. . . ." Looking around quickly, I recognized the Hollander's wife. Walking back to her, I took her arm, at first gently, then more firmly, as she refused to move or stop talking.

We crossed the yard to our house where we sat down under the shade of the grape arbor.

The two-hour service concluded, and I mistakenly thought that all was well, but when she met her husband, she stormed and fumed, shouted and yelled like one demon-possessed, as I believed she was. We tried to get her out to the sidewalk so that the people who were crowding around and gaping could see who was doing the fussing; it was not the foreign missionaries!

Praise the Lord! For several Sundays in succession this entire family has been coming to the Sunday evening services. Nothing is impossible with God!—Beatrice Hershey Hallman.

## WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE!

One spring afternoon I left Tres Lomas in the car to hold meetings in Maza, a small town forty-five miles west. Heavy rains had fallen a week previously, and not being well acquainted with the road, I entered all the submerged places with caution, keeping halfway between the fences. Finally I encountered two long water places. A hard sand bottom prevents one from getting stuck. I crept along, the water coming above the runningboards, and kept the car in low gear for fear of dropping into a hole and drowning the motor. Finally I was through these "rivers" and stopped to remove my coat, for the excitement of the experience oozed out through my skin.

"Smooth sailing" was encountered until about twenty miles from Maza where water seeped under the doors and finally I plunged into a hole immersing the headlights, but the momentum carried the front end up out of danger, leaving the rear end submerged above the fenders. There I was, and all one could hear was the sloppy lap of water at the edges of the road. Breathing a silent prayer I regained composure. All one could do was to wait about five minutes to see whether the heat of the motor had dried things out. When I tried the starter, the motor was still dead. From the exhaust pipe the noise of bubbles rose to the surface of the water. Twice again I tried the motor at five minute intervals. I scanned the horizon for help, but there was no house "nor sail" in sight. Even the sun was turning its back on my problem. In desperation I again pulled on

the starter and this time there was a sputter in the water as the motor started . The car nosed its way out of the hole, but before getting onto dry ground, dropped into another one. Now I was sure I could not get to Maza for the first meeting. But, obligingly, the motor started immediately, and no more water was encountered. I reached Maza in time for the beginning of the meetings.—Wm. E. Hallman.

### THE TENT CAMPAIGN IN GENERAL Ó'BRIEN

General Ó'Brien is a town of about one thousand inhabitants. We have a small congregation of six members in my charge. Plans were made to hold a tent campaign. In order to hold special meetings it was necessary to get an official permission from the mayor of Bragado. This permission was easily gotten because, when we first settled in Bragado, a friendship was struck up with the mayor from whom we rented a house. This mayor not only granted us permission but conceded us a vacant lot which was municipal property. The tent was set up and all was ready for the meetings.

It just happened that at this same time several monks of a certain order come to Ó'Brien for several days' special meetings in the Roman Church. It is quite evident that these people suspected that we came on purpose to make adverse propaganda. We can assure our readers, however, that had we known they were coming, we would have postponed our meetings, for we do not care to provoke or openly and directly antagonize the official church and religion. We were entirely ignorant of what was going on in official circles till a few weeks afterwards when a friend told us.

This is what happened as told us by this friend. The Friars suspected and disliked our presence from the beginning. They went to the mayor and asked him to withdraw permission and ask us to pull up stakes. The mayor refused point blank. After some wrangling, the priests appealed to the police who took no steps. Then the priests reported to the bishop of the diocese. We are not sure what all went on after that, but no stone was left unturned on their part, and the complaint was turned over to the Archbishop of Argentina, who is the spiritual head of the Roman Church in this country. Archbishop Copello reported

the matter to the Acting Vice President of the Republic, Ramón S. Castillo, who at that time exercised the powers of president. The vice president ordered the chief of police of the province to investigate the matter. Of course this redtape took a little time. At any rate we were entirely ignorant of the whole matter and before the chief of police came to investigate, our eight-day campaign was over and there was nothing special to report. We think, however, that our good friend the mayor got a severe reprimand. The Lord cares for His own.—N. Litwiller.

## AN INCIDENT

One evening in the fall of 1932, just before the terrible ash storm, we left the town of America for our weekly meeting in the town of Meridiano Quinto. All went well on the journey of some twenty-five miles. The evening service was well attended. We must confess that the return was an unpleasant trip at eleven o'clock at night over a very lonely road. This special night we left Meridiano Quinto at the usual hour. All went well until we had gone about a league and a half from the town when the right front wheel ran away from the car into the gutter. Since we were running only about twenty miles per hour, nothing serious happened.

Well, there we were on a cold, chilly fall night, four or five miles away from any help. Since it was already about 11:30 P.M., there was nothing else to do but to return on foot to the place we had left about a half hour earlier, because we did not consider it safe to remain in the car until morning. We had not gone far until we heard the approach of a man in a sulky (a two-wheeled cart). Thinking the man might give us a lift, I went to the fence and called him to stop, but instead of stopping, he drew his revolver and fired several shots and drove off. His answering us in this way surprised and frightened us so much for a short time that we did not speak or dare to move lest he misunderstand our actions.

When he had gone some distance we continued our journey, walking on the railroad ties back to Meridiano Quinto. Because of the heavy dew that night, we were wet to our knees. We arrived at the hotel greatly fatigued. Mary immediately went to bed and I sought a mechanic. In the morning the me-

chanic and I left early to repair the car, which was done in a half hour. I returned with the Ford to Meridiano Quinto, got Sister Rutt and by eight o'clock we were home again.

Rejoicing in His protecting care, we found out that night that it does not pay to ask a stranger for help at night. This is one of the very few times God allowed us such an unpleasant experience as this. The following week we made the same trip under the protecting care of an Almighty God.—J. L. Rutt.

### THE HOMEGOING OF A BIBLE READER'S MOTHER

Marcelina was a young Christian. Only a few years before, the missionaries had arrived in Pehuajó. She was one who early opened her heart to the Good News. Anxious that others might know, she began reading the Bible in homes of interested ones. Her mother, too, was converted and instructed for baptism, but when the day came for this service, her husband did not allow her to go. Sometime later she became seriously ill. Sister Selena and I had arrived in Pehuajó three months before. One night at about three o'clock, there was a tap on our bedroom window. We were alone at the mission. On opening the shutter we found Brother Pablo who beckoned us to follow him. We did so as quickly as we could, and through the dark quiet streets we walked until we arrived at Marcelina's home. Here we found people gathered in the sick room. Our Christian young people were there, having gathered for prayer. We could not understand what they were saying but it was a wonderful experience to see their faith, and we knew God understood.

The next evening we went back. The mother was still unconscious. The friends and Christian young people were there as before. Many a prayer ascended to the throne for her recovery, but with the first rays of the morning light her spirit returned to God. She was gone, but a little infant was left. The midwife had left it to die. Why should it live if the mother was gone? Sister Selena saved the little one's life and it was christened Selena Eunice.

When death entered, the father was prostrate with grief. He came into the room where we had prayed and where the little ones were sleeping. He knelt beside the crib of the two-year-old and said: "O my motherless child, what will we do?" Marcelina

was weeping quietly. She sorrowed not as one without hope. I opened her Spanish Bible and pointed out the verse: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Psalm 103:13). And God has truly been a Father to her during all these years.

The next night a large crowd came to show their last respects. At twelve o'clock the missionaries had an evangelistic funeral service. Early the next morning there was another service with the family; then Mother was gone. Juan, a cousin of Marcelina and a banker, came; he had something on his mind. He had been with the young people who had prayed. He opened his Bible and showed us a verse. This is what it said in our English Bible. John 11:37: "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man [woman] should not have died?"

The father never repented. Marcelina has remained faithful. Later she married Pablo and they two are today engaged in active mission work.—Vera Hallman.

### AN EXPERIENCE WITH A SPIRITUALIST

One of many experiences in our mission work was that of a spiritualist medium who came to our convert class and there became very much offended. After one of our members had told us her complaints, we decided to visit her.

When we approached the house, which has only one door leading to the court inside, we heard her speaking, but the girl who came to the door to answer our call said that the mistress was not at home and that she had gone to care for a sick woman. We turned to leave, but after walking a very short distance, we decided to return and tell the girl we would wait for her on the porch. The girl very reluctantly said, "Well then come in." The woman hearing the conversation and knowing that she could not deceive us, appeared and blamed the girl for saying that she was not at home. After we explained the way of salvation to her, with tears rolling down over her cheeks, she said, "Yes, I want to be a Christian."

I promised to visit her the following week and continue the teaching so that if she desired she could become a member of the church. A week later when I returned, she seemed to have

changed her attitude. She took me into a small back room; as I was about to enter, a sense of something unusual came over me, but a silent prayer soon removed all fear. Seated in the room, each of us with a Bible, I tried to teach her, but she was not interested. After I read to her a number of references, she asked me whether the dead can return to earth. I told her, "No, the good do not want to and the bad cannot." Her answer was, "Oh! No!" Immediately she became very restless. We had a prayer as usual. By the time I had finished praying, she was fairly dancing, examining the walls and the ceiling. She then screamed to the girl in the kitchen who was evidently thoroughly instructed to do her part in what was evidently a snare planned for me. But I saw nothing, and nothing unusual happened to me.

Being convinced that if she accepted Christ she could not follow spiritualism, she chose the latter, rejecting her only hope of salvation. Before the time for the next Bible lesson she sent eggs and a chicken to the mission with a note containing lots of excuses for not continuing with the lessons.—Mary Rutt.

### COMING HOME FROM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

It was in February 1930 after the annual conference at Santa Rosa. We had driven the 100 miles in our Model T Ford. The passengers were the writer and his wife, Doris and Orley, and two native girls plus suitcases and bundles of bedding for all of us to use while at conference for three days and three nights.

The conference was over by about 4 P.M. on Monday, and we started off for home on a hot sunny afternoon over rough and sandy roads. There were three cars in the group, and we would help each other patch and change tires in the first stretch of seventy-two miles. At Pellegrini the other two cars branched out in different directions, and we started on our last lap of twenty-eight miles. It was then getting dark, and the sky was turning black with thunder clouds. We hurried as much as our Ford would allow us to, thinking for a while that the storm was missing us. After driving four of five miles, suddenly the wind turned and the storm was coming rapidly upon us. We stopped to put on the side curtains and pile the suitcases and bundles of bedding inside the car. The high wind almost tore the curtains

out of our hands and for a while it seemed as though the top would tear off. We finally got the curtains on and the rain was pouring down. But lo and behold, when we wanted to start the motor, it was wet. I cranked until I could no more; then I took out the sparkplugs in the dark and rain and tried to dry them; I then cranked some more, dried more plugs and so on until finally the motor was running.

Then we started off for home. "Bang!" "There goes another tire, and we have no more spares to put on. What shall we do now?" Well, we turned back five miles to the nearest town. We got to a sort of "hotel." "Can we stay here for the night?" "No, we have no beds left." We went to another, but this was already closed for the night. We asked a policeman in the street where we could find accommodation to sleep. He directed us to a place at the other end of town. We called the owner out of bed, for it was now about midnight. Yes; he had one room and if we all wanted to sleep in there it was all right with him. Well, it would be better than to sit in the car until the next morning. So we carried our suitcases and bundles in and got settled for the night.

The two native girls were soon sleeping soundly, but we thought we felt something crawling. We turned on the light and found whole families of at least four generations of bedbugs, all sizes and all ages feasting away on the sweet blood of the foreigners. The native girls slept through till morning, but we kept the light on and kept killing bugs off the children. In fact Sister Swartzentruber sat on a chair till about 5 A.M. when we all got up and left for a tire shop. We got home, unpacked our suitcases and bedding and hung everything on the washlines, thus giving the bedbugs a chance to vacate. However, before we brought our things into the house, every piece had to be examined carefully. The only bad effect from it all was that for at least ten days our bodies were swollen and itchy from the bites.

—A. Swartzentruber.

## ROADSIDE DENTISTRY

Brethren Hershey and Zagami and I had gone to 30 de Agosto with the Bible Coach to initiate the evangelistic work there. After several days of preaching in the open air on the

street corners, doing colportage work from house to house, and visiting interested families, Brother Hershey developed a very untimely toothache. According to his dentist, it was not worth filling any more. So he tried all the "away-from-home remedies" we could think of but without obtaining comfort or relief.

When the pain became unbearable, rather than see him suffer, we offered our most expert services to pull it out if he so desired. In 30 de Agosto there was no dentist nor doctor at that time. Our suggestion, strangely (?), was not received any too warmly, at first, but as the hours swelled with pain and a wee bit of impatience, he finally said: "Let's go."

We scrubbed and disinfected the auto pliers with alcohol and set up an improvised dentist chair in the Bible Coach. The "dentist" put on a white duster which he had brought along in case he was called upon to cook the meals. Fortunately it was still clean. Then the patient, very patiently and bravely, took his seat. With his mouth very wide open we could get the pliers in, and the patient guided it to the right spot.

"Are you sure you still want it out?" asked the "dentist."

"Can't turn back now," gurgled the patient as he put his hands over the "dentist's" and together they pulled and pulled. When the tooth started to budge and since it did not break, they both put forth one supreme effort and out it came.

The patient washed out his mouth with pure alcohol, and lived happily ever afterward.

(P.S.: It was the right tooth!)—E. V. Snyder.

### THE REMARKABLE CONVERSION OF AN ENTIRE FAMILY

In the month of October tent meetings were held in the town of Ameghino where work had been opened a few months before. A certain family of Spaniards who heard the announcements from the loudspeaker of the Bible Coach and read the handbills thought the meetings could not be a thing *very* bad if they talked about God there as it seemed from the announcements. So Manuel and his sister decided to go, for their parents had always taught them to be religious and respectful concerning the things of God.

Arriving at the tent grounds, Manuel said to his sister, "You wait here until I go and see if there are women in the meeting

as well as men, then if there are, you can enter also." Seeing the pastor's wife and other women, he told her to go in with him. From the very first they liked the singing and preaching and seemed to drink in every word that was said. The next night the mother accompanied them, the father staying at home to care for some grandchildren that had the measles. As far as possible they attended all the rest of the meetings, taking turns staying with the sick grandchildren. All four confessed Christ as their Saviour.

Upon the advice of the pastor they bought a Bible and began reading it. María the daughter decided to read it through during the year. Every night she reads aloud to her parents. Recently she said that they feel they cannot retire without first reading a portion of God's Word. Even when they go to the services and arrive home late, she reads before going to bed. Almost every time the pastor visits them, she has questions about some portion she has read or some teaching she has found. During the nine months since she first heard the Gospel, an almost incredible spiritual growth has taken place in her life. She can converse intelligently upon the great doctrines of the Bible and has already been the means of the conversion of others. Each member of the family, as he discovers new light, is willing to obey. Being Catholics and naturally of a religious nature, they had many images of saints and of the Virgin Mary in their house. When they realized that it was a sin to worship idols, they gathered them all together and made a fire of them. This took place about eight months after the tent meetings.

It is very difficult for them to understand how so many people can be deceived and why they do not turn to the light of the Gospel. They realize that they have lived in darkness all their lives. Many times they say that before they did the best they knew but did not have the true light. There are also three married children, one of whom is already converted. The other two are reading the Bible and gradually coming into the light as did their parents and younger brother and sister.

The remarkable conversion of this entire family verifies again the words of the Apostle Paul to the Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*."—T. H. Brenneman.

### SATAN MAKES TROUBLE

One of our young members could not overcome the smoking habit and besides he went around with worldly companions too much. He had not fully consecrated his life to the Lord even though he had memorized many Scripture verses.

One day I was hurriedly walking down the street when I saw the young brother coming in the opposite direction. I thought he had a cigarette in his mouth but it disappeared so quickly that I could not be sure. Later, after he had consecrated his life more fully and had overcome the habit, he told me that he quickly put the cigarette in his pocket and the result was a hole burned in the pocket. This young man is now our native preacher who enthusiastically preaches the Word. Sometimes the outcome of a member's life and service in the church is doubtful, but if he allows the Holy Spirit to fill him and guide in all things, he can be a blessing to his Master.—W. G. Lauver.

### TWO GIRLS DISAGREE

I was preparing the children for a Christmas program. The children came at one hour and I had the young folks come at another. Two girls in their teens were inseparable. They always sat together in church and were together when seen on the street. One day I noticed they were not laughing and joking as usual and seemed very serious. When they sang in the chorus, although standing side by side, one looked out the window and the other in another direction.

Dolores left at once when practice was over; but María stayed and told me about their trouble. She said that she would never speak to the other first if they never made up. But finally after we had talked a while, she decided that she would accompany me to some homes in the afternoon, and we would also go to Dolores' house to see if the matter could be fixed up. They did make up and we had prayer. This María is now Mrs. María Paz de Gorjón, one of our native workers. She was always at the service when young; sometimes she was a problem because she giggled so much but she was always willing to work in whatever corner the Lord needed her in His service. She has been a help to Brother Gorjón at times when he was discouraged.

—Florence B. Lauver.

## "NOT SO OLD YET"

Having prepared the program for the annual conference that was to be held at Santa Rosa, the Swartzentruber family with Brother Luayza, whom they had invited to accompany them to Tres Lomas, was returning from America where the committee had their meeting. For some reason or other night came on before they got to Trenque Lauquen, and the question was raised as to where they should go for supper. Mrs. Swartzentruber volunteered the suggestion that they go to a hotel since it was late already and since at Mrs. Hershey's age it was too much for her to get supper for so many "extras." Everybody favored this as the wisest thing to do until they started to calculate the cost, reckoning that it would run well over ten pesos. Then Brother Swartzentruber asked Brother Luayza how much of the bill he could stand.

"Oh," said he, "I was invited along as company; so I'm not supposed to pay anything."

After a rather cumbersome and prolonged silence Bro. Swartzentruber tried to say quite naturally: "Well, then I guess after all Mrs. Hershey isn't so very old yet;—let's go there!"

—Albano Luayza.

## OBEDIENCE

In the first series of meetings that were held in Tres Lomas to initiate the work there, Brother Luayza had been invited to help the Swartzentrubers who were still new in the work. The attendance was splendid all the twenty days of the meetings. During the daytime the three of them go out to visit families and read the Bible to interested people. At one place Brother Luayza took the privilege of asking Mrs. Swartzentruber to read the portion of Scripture he had selected. Not being too familiar yet with the Spanish language, Mrs. Swartzentruber could not hide the consternation that had struck her at this unannounced turn of the program. Although she obeyed the request, quite reluctantly, after returning home she remonstrated with Brother Luayza saying: "What will the people have thought of me trying to read in Spanish?" To which Brother Luayza added playfully aggravating, "Oh, they would just think that you are an ignorant foreigner," upon which, as he

still recalls, Mrs. Swartzentruber "preached at him" until supper time.—Albano Luayza.

## "NICE DAGO"

We had begun the first series of meetings in Ramos Mejia, a suburb of Buenos Aires, in April 1942 in one of our tents when one night Brother Hallman also dropped in. As was natural Brother Luayza asked him to lead the singing and also to teach the children some new choruses. After several hymns it was discovered that they did not know the chorus:

"If we all work together, together, together;
If we all work together, what a great work that will be.
Your work will be my work; our work is God's work.
If we all work together, what a great work that will be."

So Brother Hallman set about teaching it to them with the motions adapted to the words. This was new and all the children took part until the enthusiasm almost ran away with the meeting. Finally, when they all knew it, a five-year-old voice was heard to pipe above the others:

"How nice the dago sings! I like it because he seems so funny!"—Albano Luayza.

## FORGIVING

One day there was a scrap among two young men of our congregation. It was so serious that even outside people knew about it. The time for communion was near; so something had to be done before they could take communion or have peace in their own hearts. After I talked with them both separately, they agreed that I bring them both together. Even then the discussion got on the old subject again. But after I talked pretty straight to them, they said they wanted to settle the matter as Christians should; so pardon was asked and the thing was forgiven.

It was a joy to see them wash feet together at communion time. Some of these people have inherited a nature that makes their fellowship with others difficult sometimes, but if they allow the Holy Spirit to fill them and guide them in all things, they can be a blessing to their Master.—W. G. Lauver.

CHAPTER X

# OUR MISSION AND THE GOVERNMENT

BY T. K. HERSHEY

The history of the Mennonite Church in Argentina during the twenty-five years since the landing of the first missionaries would not be complete without a brief account of the attitude of the government toward the mission and the things which it exacts of us. The mission has never been called into question or before a judicial body for not having complied with the government requirements. Many and varied were the requests, as we shall see, that came to us, but none that we could not comply with conscientiously. In the following paragraphs we shall consider some of these requirements and the political situation of the country in general.

## Incorporation Papers

One of the first things necessary in order to purchase and hold property in the name of the Mission Board was to take out incorporation papers. The initial step taken in this direction was to appoint one of the missionaries as power of attorney to act for the Mission Board in this country. On August 1, 1922, the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities granted me this legal power and since that time while on the field I have been its official representative.

I then proceeded to get our mission incorporated in Argentina. This legal power was officially translated into Spanish. Mr. Huntington, a lawyer formerly from the United States, had become a national translator on legal matters and very ably lent us his services. Through Mr. Huntington and José A. Casado, a national notary public, the power of attorney was legally recognized and inscribed into the official incorporation papers, granted by the government January 23, 1923. This meant that the Mennonite Mission is now incorporated in this Republic and is known as *"La Junta Menonita de Misiones y Caridades de la Argentina"* (The Argentine Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities).

The original constitution, laws, and bylaws of the Mission Board in North America had to be translated also into Spanish, which in itself filled up thirteen sheets of government official paper, size eight inches by twelve inches, written on both sides. The entire cost of this translation, conferring power of attorney, government charges, and fees of lawyer and notary public was 1,395 pesos.

The mission could then, as expressed in the Argentine Constitution, establish and maintain missions and do missionary work; care for and provide for orphans, old people, the needy and distressed; receive and hold donations; acquire deeds to properties or funds from all sources; administer, rent, improve, sell, or dispose in any other way of property that may have become the possession of the said institution; manage, control, or make loans of all funds for the board.

In order that some other missionary could proceed with the legal affairs of the mission, in case of sickness, death, or furlough, the authority to act in the capacity of the board's attorney was officially conferred on J. W. Shank, October 6, 1934. One or the other of us may act as power of attorney in all legal matters for the mission.

In time, as the work extended and became established in its different departments, certain contracts with the government became necessary. These increased when the party in power changed politically. We shall now consider some of the requirements and favors received from the government.

## TAX EXEMPTION

Another substantial aid to the mission financially is the exemption of all our properties from taxation. The Argentine law exempts all churches from taxation. When this law was passed, without a doubt it referred to the Catholic churches. When the evangelicals began to solicit the government for this special favor, it was difficult to secure. The argument given was that it referred to Catholic church buildings. Our notary public, twenty years ago, claimed that it did not say "Catholic churches," but only "churches." The result has been from then to the present time that we have been granted exemption from taxes in all the properties owned and used for mission purposes.

The mission's power of attorney must send an application annually, soliciting this exemption. The request must be done separately for each property and sent to the General Civil Registry Office in La Plata. (This city is the capital of the province of Buenos Aires. A province corresponds to a state in United States.) This request is then returned to the Civil Registry Office in the town where exemption has been solicited with orders to investigate whether the property is still being used for mission purposes and not for commercial ends. If satisfied with their findings, a favorable reply is sent to headquarters. When the state authorities in La Plata are convinced that the request for exemption is justifiable, a receipt is then sent to the local Civil Registry. The pastor in charge is notified to sign a document, showing that the receipt has been handed over to the property owner. This document is returned to the capital of the province.

Some of these documents go astray through a change in office help or carelessness in sending them to and from La Plata. Often much correspondence is the result before the documents can be traced down. Some have never been located. This has caused a great amount of extra work for the power of attorney of the mission.

Mr. R. W. Huntington, already referred to, was our representative and legal adviser in government affairs for years. However, this good counsellor has gone the way of all flesh. Dr. George O'Farrell, a lawyer of the same firm that Mr. Huntington represented, has taken the place of the former and acts in all legal matters for the mission. He is the son of an English-speaking doctor (Irish). Since he is Argentine born, it enables him to grasp readily ours as well as the government's viewpoints.

## ANNUAL REPORTS

The government exacts of all societies incorporated in the country that their board or executive bodies have a central office in Buenos Aires, and that at least one or two sessions of their meetings be held in the city. The government is to be notified of the time and place of such meetings to which it reserves the right to send an official inspector to sit in session with said body.

We have never had an inspector in any of our meetings although many have been held in Buenos Aires.

Another denomination had the happy (?) experience of an inspector present in one of their meetings. In relating this event, it was reported that the government official with surprise remarked, "I have never been present in such a gathering of men before; there was no smoking nor quarrelling. In almost all such meetings of executives, they wrangle, fuss, get angry, and at times threaten each other, but here I find nothing of the kind." That was a good testimony for the evangelical movement.

Besides the meetings required in Buenos Aires, incorporated organizations must send the government an annual report of the principal proceedings and resolutions passed, also an estimated value of all properties and furnishings belonging to said organization. The original report must be sent to the General Inspector of Justice and a copy inserted in a memorandum book which beforehand has been rubricated* by the government's representative. Rubrication consists of a stamped seal and reads:

> "General Inspection of Justice—Inventory and Balance Sheet Book No. 1 of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, and is composed of 100 serviceable pages. This book is rubricated from pages 11 to 100.
>
> Signed ——————————
>
> General Inspector."

For the rubrication of these books, there is a charge of 200 pesos, but being a religious organization, we are exempt from these expenses.

We are also requested to send annually some of the more important resolutions and decisions of the Mission Council, the managing committee, and the Pastors' Meeting. It is required to send annually itemized receipts and expenditures of the mission for government inspection. This report states the amount received from foreign sources and from national funds. On the expenditure side, it is shown that this money is used for

* Rubricating is putting the seal on the first page and a certain mark on each of the following pages. No page is to be cut out.

allowances, rents, Orphanage, clinic, charitable work, Bible School, Bible Coach and tent campaigns, publications, traveling, repairs, local church expenses, and miscellaneous. The minutes and books of all such reports must be kept in Spanish. In correspondence with Mr. Huntington about this in 1931, he wrote:

"Dear Mr. Hershey: Today I had a conversation with Mr. Amadeo, General Inspector of Justice, with regard to keeping your books in Spanish. He advises that you begin to do so as from the last balance you filed there, which should be transcribed in your Journal or Invoice Book, as your system of bookkeeping may be.

"I think that although the office itself would probably never trouble you, some 'papist enemy' might at any time make you trouble, and the law requires all societies and companies to keep their accounts in Spanish, although you may keep a duplicate in any foreign language."

We state the above to show the possible danger that might arise by not keeping our minutes and books in Spanish.

## NEW CODES FOR FOREIGN ASSOCIATIONS

On May 17, 1940, the newspaper came out with the following headline: "Argentina Adopts Drastic Measures." Dr. Ortiz, the president, addressed the public and defined the Articles of the Constitution and the Civil Code which was meant to halt subversive propaganda in the Republic. All foreign entities are watched much more in these last years than formerly. It is absolutely necessary to comply, when possible, to all government demands.

Dr. Ortiz, President of the Nation, decrees:

"Article I. All associations, whether or not incorporated, shall inform the Ministry of the Interior or the chief of police of their various districts, their denominations, their purposes, their rules and regulations, their membership, giving Christian and surnames, age, whether married or single, profession, nationality, and address. They shall be obliged to put at the disposition of the authorities, whenever so requested, a book of their Minutes, containing all the resolutions adopted.

"Article II. Such may not have or utilize national emblems, other than those approved by the state nor adopt symbols,

hymns, uniforms, or devices that distinguish foreign parties or associations.

"Article III. The denominational status and rules which they use shall be written only in Spanish.

* * *

"Article VI. No association may be dependent upon foreign governments nor foreign entities, nor receive from abroad any kind of subsidy or donations, except for a benevolent nature, acceptance of which may be made after due notification to the Argentine Government.

"Article VII. Foreign associations established with cultural, artistic, or social assistance purposes may continue their activities unhindered without further obligations than those imposed by Article I.

"Article VIII. Noncompliance with the preceding dispositions will determine the immediate dissolution of such infractory associations without appeal to laws already in force."

Article IV and V deal with political offenders. Article IX sets ninety days as the time limit to comply, and Article X states that the decree must be signed by the Minister of the Interior and Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Justice and Public Instruction.

From the above it is clearly seen that a foreign organization, although incorporated, must adhere to existing laws and government requirements in this country where it functions.

## PERIODICALS, "EL CAMINO VERDADERO"

All foreign periodicals are being watched very closely in this country, especially during these war times. As a result a law has been framed (No. 12,104) which obliges all owners of newspapers, magazines, and periodicals of propaganda, to register them and send copies of each issue to the Minister of the Interior.

We were notified that *El Camino Verdadero* (*The True Way*), our four-page propaganda leaflet, comes under this law. A blank form was sent to the administrator of our Printery with the instructions that it should be filled out and returned to the Minister of the Interior within a given date or pay a fine of 200 pesos or be arrested and imprisoned from thirty to sixty

days. I contended that since *El Camino Verdadero* was a religious propaganda leaflet and had nothing to do with politics, it could not be included under Law No. 12,104. Correspondence to this effect and copies of the paper were sent to the minister in question. After several trips to Buenos Aires where, through our legal adviser and personally, the government's minister was contacted and convinced that we were right. We were not only pardoned of the threatened penalty, but the following note was sent to me.

> "I take pleasure in addressing you and in reply to your letter of the 29th of May, 1940, in which you communicated that it discloses the Printery in question does not come under Law No. 12,104. Consequently, this terminates the data solicited by this General Administration.
>
> Respectfully yours,
> Alfredo Lucadamo, General Manager."

Undoubtedly we were very well pleased to receive this letter. Yet for some reason, possibly through change of office help or failure to file systematically the correspondence, in January 1942, and in June 1942, similar requests came from the government with the usual threats of punishment for noncompliance. Both times these petitions I answered by citing in full Mr. Lucadamo's answer of May 1940 and both times correspondence ceased. All that is now required is to send a copy of *El Camino Verdadero* to the Minister of the Interior. This is gladly done.

## POLICE PERMIT

On December 28, 1928, after personally soliciting the chief police in La Plata, we were granted permission to travel to all parts of the Argentine Republic with the Bible Coach for religious purposes. The exact wording as inserted in the permit, Order of the Day, as it is called, and sent to all police quarters is as follows:

"This is to certify that permission has been granted to the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities to travel throughout the Province with a large truck and a small one with the exclusive object to distribute religious literature and to hold

public meetings of a religious character, and that as long as they do not depart from the purpose expressed, they shall not be hindered in their work."

On December 9, 1938, ten years later, we wrote La Plata, inquiring whether the Permit No. 12,581 was still valid, because we had been told that after ten years it would be necessary to renew. On December 16, 1938, the following reply came from the chief police of the Province:

> "Mr. T. K. Hershey, Power of Attorney for the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities:
>
> "Your letter of Dec. 9 is at hand and in reply, I make known to you that the resolution of the Permit No. 12,581 issued Dec. 28, 1928 is still valid, by which permission is given to your Mission to travel to all parts of the Province with the exclusive object of distributing Gospel literature and holding public services of a religious character.
>
> "On the other hand, freedom of worship in this country has no limitation, for that reason, you are free to use this right without soliciting authorization from the local police authorities."

During these years, this special permission was all that was needed to show the local authorities who we were and our mission. However, in December 1940, while the Bible Coach and tent were in Mechita, the police authorities interfered and would not allow the meetings to proceed. Our special permit from La Plata was shown, but to no avil. The local chief of police claimed that Decree No. 111, recently issued, annulled all former permits. A personal visit to La Plata by the power of attorney resulted in the sending of a message from headquarters to the chief of police in Bragado (Mechita is located in county of Bragado) which stated "Decree No. 111 does not apply to the Mennonites as their meetings are of a religious nature and not political. Consequently, their work comes under Section Social Order." He was further informed to notify the police in Trenque Lauquen to inform me that the meetings may go on undisturbed. This was done and we all felt that God had again helped us out of a hard place and that victory had been won.

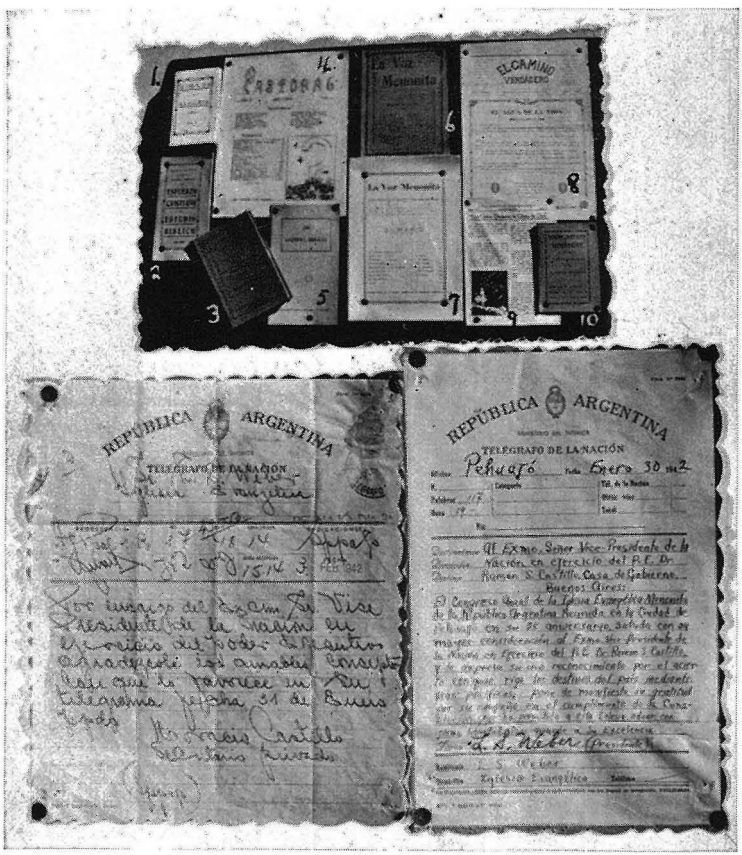
The above briefly told is to show some of the contacts that have been made in different ways with the government and the favors granted by it to our mission. Other illustrations might be given to show the many favors received from the Argentine government.

The things exacted are to curtail the activities of foreign associations whose actions are not in accordance with the liberally worded Argentine Constitution on the subject of the rights of resident foreigners. This is evident from a statement of the late President Ortiz on occasion: "The activities of some foreigners who come to this country and place themselves under the guarantees of the Argentine Constitution, show such very strange conduct that it behooves the government to take legal steps with the purpose of assuring the integrity of the spirit of the National Constitution."

Laws are made for lawbreakers and not for a peace-loving people. But all foreigners are placed on the same level and the obedient must suffer with the disobedient, and are obliged to report to the government as any other nonreligious entity must do. The mission has always conscientiously tried to comply with the requirements of the government under whose protection we live and do mission work and under whose jurisdiction we possess nearly 300,000 pesos worth of property.

## MILITARY SERVICE

Military service is obligatory in this country for all young men citizens. When an Argentine-born young man is eighteen years of age, he must enroll. He is given an Enrollment Booklet which contains his birth registration, a description of his person, his photograph, and fingerprints. He is not called to military training until twenty years old, and even then he may not be called. Each year the authorities decide how many thousands of young men of twenty years are needed for military service. It is decided by lot which ones of all the thousands enrolled will be obliged to report for training. The rest are exempt from training. If a citizen does not enroll or report when called, he is subject to a fine, imprisonment, or an extra year of service in the regular army.




TOP: Bulletin board in front of Carlos Casáres Church, announcing Bible Sunday. The most attractive feature was the text, "God is love," written in eleven different languages spoken in Casáres

SECOND: Argentine Mennonite publications. (See publications page 244.)

THIRD: Telegrams interchanged with President Castillo and the Mennonite Conference. (See page 245.)

The question that concerns the Argentine Mennonite Church is, What can she do so that her young men may be exempt from such service? Up to the present, we have been too few to make a direct appeal to the government. Some of our young men have marvellously escaped from being drafted. As has been explained, not all who are twenty must go, only those who were drawn to fill the number required. Every year there are many who escape military training for lawful reasons or excuses. Some names are drawn but because of physical unfitness the persons escape. Others who are the only supports of widowed mothers and still others whose parents are aged and not able to support themselves return home and are exempt from military service.

Some of our boys were drawn, and being physically fit were obliged to render one year of military training. You ask, Must our Mennonite boys in Argentina take training in military camps? Yes; if they are drawn and are physically fit. How to handle this question has always been a problem for our mission. We are foreigners here, and to tell our young men to refuse said training for scriptural reasons would offend the government greatly and we would run the risk of being asked to discontinue our mission work. As shown in this same chapter, all foreign associations have always been watched, and more so now, and any entity that acts or suggests anything contrary to government requirements is placed on the Black List and dealt with according to the existing laws.

All that we can do and have been doing when a young brother is drawn and must go to military service is to pray with him and for him that he may remain true and faithful to our Lord who has called him to Christian service. If possible, he is visited; correspondence is kept up between him and the pastor; and tracts are sent to him and he is advised to testify for the Lord daily.

One case will illustrate the Christian influence felt in such service. A young man was called, passed his physical examination, and was obliged to serve his year of training. Through correspondence and personal visits, we were constantly in touch with him. He served his time, at the close of which the official gave him a Certificate of Good Conduct. This he treasures very

much, for this recommendation is a rare favor to young men in service. Besides, he left with fine personal comments and recommendations from the authorities. He was the only young man who did not smoke and who kept up his daily devotional period. His fellow comrades liked him. Some who enjoyed to make fun, called him "pastor." Not all boys leave with such high honors and good conduct as this one. The taint of sin in some form or other is at times noted on their return from service.

All the Mennonite Church in Argentina can do now is to pray and strive to let her nonresistant and peace principles be known throughout this country. In the meantime we should thoroughly indoctrinate our members with these Biblical principles so that the church of tomorrow may have a conviction sufficiently strong to make an appeal to the government officials for exemption from military service for our boys.

The whole question has been and is still studied, but a church with only a few more than 500 members is too small to make herself felt to a very great extent in government circles. The colonization of Mennonites in Paraguay and in southern Brazil has placed this denominational name before the general public in a way that has helped to make known who we are and what we believe. It is hoped that the day may come when there will be a chain of Mennonite churches with thousands of members not only in Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina, but also in adjacent republics, such as, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Chile.

On my visit to the colony of Mennonites in Paraguay, I came in contact with a Bolivian Consul who asked me whether there were no Mennonites to send to Bolivia, too. His knowledge of the Mennonites in Paraguay was that they are a peace-loving people, which his country needed also. When other countries come to realize this, then appeals can be made and exemptions will doubtless be granted. In the meantime, the prayers, patience, and sympathy of the Mother Church are solicited for the Argentine Mennonite boys who at the present time find it compulsory to take one year of military training.

### THE POLITICAL SITUATION AND THE NATIONAL SPIRIT

During the World War, Argentina steered clear of all international entanglements. This same policy of strict neutrality

is considered traditional and Argentines rightly pride themselves in their attitude.

In spite of the avowed purpose of the executive authorities of the Argentine to remain strictly neutral, the situation in World War II makes it well-nigh impossible to maintain this viewpoint. It is only natural that in the gigantic struggle which we all are witnessing, it is very difficult not to be sympathetic with one group or the other of the belligerents. To avoid any undue manifestation of sympathy for either group, the executive power has imposed a state of siege. Probably this is a very good thing, because the newspapers as well as the radio must be extremely careful in their reports and information, limiting themselves to bare facts. In spite of this ruling, newspapers overstep themselves sometimes and are closed down for a short period and radios are silenced for twenty hours at a time as a disciplinary measure. Groups of extremists break loose and manifest their viewpoint by breaking the shop windows of opposing groups.

Undoubtedly hidden forces are exerting pressure on the government. It is evident that money is being spent for propaganda purposes and anti-Argentine pro-Axis activities have been uncovered. On the other hand, British and American groups and sympathizers celebrate pro-Ally meetings for the purpose of raising funds for the benefit of prisoners of war or Red Cross. Substantial donations are made by British residents in Argentina as well as by sympathizers toward the Spit-Fire Fund and other war causes.

We feel that the executive power of government is trying to be really neutral. However, the party opposed to the government has made a political issue out of the whole situation and is accusing the government of pro-Axis tendencies. While it is true that in the party in power there are avowed totalitarians, yet we feel that the majority of the population continues to favor the democratic form of government. It also appears that the executive power of government has no intention of changing its policy. True to the popular trend among other South American countries the spirit of nationalism is very evident and is becoming stronger and more influential. National holidays are used to advantage to accelerate this feeling. It is altogether

logical, therefore, that some of this same spirit should manifest itself in our mission. Missionaries are foreigners and as such find themselves the objects of criticism and accusation for real or supposed infringements on the national patrimony. One Argentine worker, an ordained man, we regret to say, developed an unusually strong antimissionary complex and left the church with the majority of his congregation.

We trust and hope that the pendulum of this extreme spirit of nationalism will soon start swinging back the other way. We trust that at least as far as we missionaries are concerned, we may understand and exemplify the truth that in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, that on the resurrection morn there will be present those of every tribe, nation, tongue, and color. If we have already risen with Christ, surely we must manifest that spirit now. Let us pray to this end.

SOME OF THE PUBLICATIONS OF OUR PRINTERY:

1. *Himnos de Alegría, No. 2.* The second hymnbook (without music) published by our printery.

2. The 1942 *Booklet of Christian Endeavor Bible Study* meetings.

3. *Confession of Faith and Brief Catechism* translated and published by T. K. Hershey, in 1927.

4. *El Pastoral,* a mimeographed notebook of helps and expositions, especially for our workers, edited by E. V. Snyder.

5. *Twenty Bible Lessons* for candidates for baptism.

6. *La Voz Menonita,* (*The Mennonite Voice*) old format, 1932-1935.

7. *La Voz Menonita,* new format, 1936- ; edited by A. Luayza, 1932- .

8. *El Camino Verdadero,* (*The True Way*), old format, 1921-1928; edited by A. Luayza.

9. *El Camino Verdadero,* format from 1929- ; present editor, E. V. Snyder.

10. 1942 Annual Conference Minutes.

## TRANSLATION OF TELEGRAMS INTERCHANGED WITH THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF ARGENTINA AND THE 1942 ANNUAL MENNONITE CONFERENCE HELD AT PEHUAJÓ*

To His Excellency the Vice President of the Nation "in exercise of the Executive Powers," Dr. Ramón S. Castillo, Government House, Buenos Aires:

The Annual Conference of the Evangelical Mennonite Church of the Argentine Republic meeting in the city of Pehuajó on its 25th Anniversary send sincere greetings to His Excellency the Vice President of the Nation "in exercise of the Executive Powers," Dr. Ramón S. Castillo, and wishes to express its hearty recognition of the adroitness (*acierto*) with which he has guided the destiny of the country by pacific means, and further manifests its gratitude for his determination to carry out the Constitution which has permitted this church to work in absolute freedom. May God keep His Excellency.

Signed, L. S. Weber, Moderator.

To L. S. Weber:

By order of His Excellency the Vice President of the Nation, "in exercise of the Executive Powers," I wish to thank you for the amiable estimation with which you favor him in your telegram of January 31 inst.

Horacio Castillo.
(Private Secretary).

* For photographic reproduction of these telegrams see page 240.

CHAPTER XI

# CHANGES IN TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

BY J. W. SHANK

## Changes in the Mission and Christian Community

A Mennonite mission in Argentina twenty-five years ago was yet in the dream stage. Not a single station had been opened. We missionaries had no definite idea as to what part of Argentina would be our future home. We had no experience in actual mission work in the foreign field. We did not even possess a knowledge of the language of the people.

But years of experience have brought all of these things. The four missionaries who began the task in 1917 have seen the arrival of many others until today twenty-seven are occupied on the field, and besides these a fine group of native Christians give their full time to the work. From one station in 1919 we have reached out from town to town until today, twenty-five years later, our thirty or more stations and outstations inclose a region hundreds of miles in length and breadth. Properties, having a total value of almost $100,000, have been purchased and improved, providing these new Christian communities with commodious church buildings and workers' homes. In many other towns and villages the Gospel is preached and public testimony is given at irregular intervals. In all, twenty-five congregations have been formed, making an average of one additional congregation being founded each year since the beginning of the mission.

The missionaries who were on the field from the beginning notice the great change that comes to a mission when its staff of workers increases manifold. First there were four of us; then eight; then twelve; then fifteen, eighteen, twenty, and now twenty-seven. Then along with the increase in missionaries came the increase in native workers. As the number of foreign and native workers increases, the mission organization becomes more complex. There are more stations, more institutions,

more expenses, and with these comes more clerical work for the mission chairman, secretary, and treasurer, as well as for committeemen.

How different it is today for the new missionary arrivals! They find a more or less complex organization and a field so large that it would take weeks for them to cover it in visitation. We come together in conference and we feel like Jacob of old when he said, "With my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands." In conference we find some forty workers (native and foreign) with their families, besides other delegates from all of the churches. In our first conference we all sat around one table. Now we are too many for tables; other methods are used for feeding the crowds.

In the beginning the missionaries were strangers in a strange land. We were looked upon with suspicion, and our motives were not understood. But with the passing years the citizens of the towns and villages have become accustomed to these light-haired foreigners. Business men today are our friends and they are ready to offer their services to us in many ways. They will trust the missionary implicitly because they have found him to be, like the traditional Englishman, a man of his word.

Even Catholic priests have been known to remark that the moral integrity of the people of the mission is not to be despised nor criticized. When a member of the Catholic Church falls into error, little is thought or said about it; but if it is a member of the mission church who goes astray, the matter becomes the talk of the town. This shows that the people have learned to expect better things of the members of our native churches than of those of the Catholic Church.

In the earlier years of the mission, in each town, our church members were all first-generation Christians. The parents of most of them had not been Christians and therefore could not give them a heritage of Christian training and faith. This situation has changed to a great extent. Many of our young people today have been brought up from childhood in Christian homes. They have grown up as Sunday-school pupils, and from childhood they have known Bible stories and have memorized beautiful scripture texts. These young people have also had a better opportunity to become educated than their parents. They be-

come better helpers in the mission as Sunday-school teachers or officers or as personal workers. Among them there exists less superstition than in their parents twenty years ago. They also acquire better positions than their parents had. A visitor to our mission may find among our members railway officials or employees, independent tailors, bookkeepers, office clerks, building contractors, schoolteachers, mechanics, house decorators, salesmen, nurses, and doctors.

The home life of many of our church members has changed. They have raised their standard of living. Their homes are cleaner and have better furnishings, and they usually have more space at their disposal. Formerly it was very common for a family to have only one room as a living and bedroom and besides that a very small kitchen. There are still many homes of that type, but the average home of Christians today is better equipped for convenience and comfort.

Since there is better sanitation in all aspects of life than formerly, one can understand why individual homes have made an improvement. Such a thing as a screen door or a screened window was unknown twenty years ago. They are as yet not generally in use but at least all meat shops in the more progressive towns have them.

## CHANGES IN TOWN AND COUNTRY LIFE

Twenty-five years ago the buildings in all interior towns were of the old Spanish type having large rooms with high ceilings, with the front room next to the street and the other rooms strung out with a long corridor on the one side and probably a dining room extending out, giving the entire house the form of the letter L. All homes had high walls at the front and side of the inclosed yard, thus making the inclosure completely private. Most of the windows were protected by iron bars or iron shutters, and the doors in addition to the usual locks had a heavy iron bar that could be put into position at night as a precaution against thieves.

Many houses of this style are still found in every town. But the tendency is to follow a new style of building, which is of the bungalow type. These have gable roofs, with low ceilings,

wide windows, small porches at the front or side and all the rooms grouped together in the American style. Instead of high walls next to the street, there is usually a low cement wall with some sort of iron fencing on top. The houses are seldom built out to the street as formerly. Instead they are set back giving space for shrubbery and flowers. All public buildings, such as banks, schools, or business houses are being built on a new style with lines and simple adornment.

Business of every sort has greatly improved in recent years. The window displays are a marvel compared to those of twenty-five years ago. Ready-made clothing for both sexes, that was rarely seen in former years, is now on display everywhere. Furniture of the most modern type, as well as up-to-date kitchen furnishings, are on sale. The present-day bazaar with its wonderful display of glassware and chinaware is an attraction unknown to the people in the early twenties. Even the bookstores present a tasty assortment of every imaginable book and magazine in colors that attract the attention of every schoolboy or girl.

In the early years of our life in Argentina, we felt the lack of many articles of food to which we had been accustomed in the homeland. Now a great change has taken place. We can buy all kinds of fruits and vegetables out of season. These are shipped in from northern Argentina and from other tropical countries. Canned fruits used to be available only to wealthy people who could pay the exorbitant prices. Today we can buy a variety of canned goods at a very reasonable price. Even canned vegetables have been placed on the market in recent years.

The factory in interior towns was unknown twenty-five years ago. To be sure there were the makers of baskets, moccasins, spaghetti, mosaics, and other articles, on a small scale. But only recently have the real factories, employing at times hundreds of people, come into being. Such articles as stoves, pumps, candy, cheap shoes, furniture, and clothing are produced in considerable quantities. Because of the factories and the increase in the number of automobiles, there is more work for young people than formerly. The young men of the common class used to go out to the rural sections to get work in

the harvest fields. Today most of them can get work in the larger interior towns. Formerly the only occupations open to young women were schoolteaching, professional sewing, music instruction, and domestic service. Today there are cash girls and clerks in stores, bookkeepers, stenographers, and employees in some factories.

During these years we have seen very great city improvements. The streets of five of the largest towns in our mission district have been paved within the last fifteen years. Water systems have been installed in a few towns. New and modern municipal buildings have been put up in a large number of towns. Normal schools, as well as schools of arts and trades, have been opened in Trenque Lauquen and Bragado and a National College in Pehuajó. Costly banks, modern hotels, and up-to-date automobile service stations have been built in all of the larger towns.

We have also seen changes in the schools. Formerly nearly all schools occupied rented buildings which were not well adapted to school purposes. There were insufficient schools to accommodate all children of school age. In recent years, however, a large number of provincial school buildings have been put up. These are quite modern in plan and equipment. The laws of compulsory education have never been fully enforced, but since more teachers and classroom space are available, many more children of the very poor attend school than in former times. Furthermore, in all of the larger towns municipal kindergartens have been established. These have up-to-date equipment. Their teachers have been trained in a national kindergarten Normal School in Buenos Aires. The mission kindergartens established twenty-three years ago were the first in existence in any of the interior towns of our district. Today the municipal kindergartens are our rivals inasmuch as they have more money at their disposal for the purchase of costly equipment. Although several new normal schools have been established in recent years and the Pehuajó school has been greatly enlarged, yet there is not sufficient space for all who would like to attend. The wealthier people are still the ones whose children occupy most of the available space in secondary schools.

The new government schools of arts and trades that have sprung up within the last fifteen years have been a boon to the boys of the poorer classes. Boys can enter these schools after they have satisfactorily completed the fourth grade. Their education in some of the common school subjects is continued in the trade schools, and in addition they are given daily instruction in drawing, carpentry, blacksmithing, and mechanics. In this way, after completing the three-year course, they are better prepared to find employment upon leaving school.

The rural sections of Argentina have changed much during the quarter of a century in which our mission is in operation. The immense farms (*estancias*) have installed many modern conveniences in their homes, such as electric light plants, water systems, and heating plants. Their farm equipment today will include a number of modern trucks and automobiles, big combine harvesters, tractors, and other modern machinery. They have also improved the living quarters for their workmen.

Buenos Aires is the great center of trade for all Argentina. The first missionaries of our mission spent over a year in this great capital. In all the years since that time, the missionaries have come and gone through this great city. We have seen tremendous changes with the passing years. The last fifteen years have brought a large number of real skyscrapers, hundreds of the most modern apartment houses, a few dozen of the finest new hotels, a number of banks whose cost is more than a million dollars each, and a series of entirely modern government buildings costing hundreds of millions. In addition to the one subway that was built more than twenty-five years ago a number of new subways now connect the principal railway centers in the city with the central business section. Several wide diagonal streets are being opened extending in different directions from the congested areas of the city. Another important street in the heart of the city (*Corrientes,* by name) has been widened and is now becoming a great shopping center. A few years ago a row of city blocks were torn out and a street has been made there. This street has the distinction of being the widest street in the world. It is named *Nueve de Julio.*

Even the customs of Argentina are changing. Years ago we noticed that only men followed in a funeral procession. Today

women and children also attend the burial at the cemetery. The old custom of all members of the family wearing mourning clothing after the death of some member of the family is no longer practiced so rigidly as it was. The people follow modern styles with just as much care as the Americans do. The customs of the great city pass quickly to the interior towns. Years ago women's hats and dresses were never seen on sale outside the very largest cities. Today this is changed. The young people of the interior towns appear quite as elegantly dressed as their city cousins.

## CHANGES IN ROADS AND TRAVEL

Travel by train in wintertime twenty years ago was an ordeal since no heat of any kind was supplied. Passengers shivered with cold even though they wore the heaviest clothing. But today all through trains are heated and travel is quite comfortable in cold weather. A few trains that cater to wealthy travelers to the principal summer resorts are air-conditioned.

Even travel by bus between country towns was unknown during the first fifteen years of our mission's history. There were stage coaches drawn by horses, but even these were not in general use. Today there is a complete system of bus lines that ply between important towns. They offer more frequent service than the railways. This bus service is of special advantage to the native and missionary pastors who can reach outstations more easily than formerly. Most of these buses are of quite modern construction.

Two decades ago even the principal roads were in a lamentable condition. Many low places were filled with water. The motorist found great difficulty in travel after every heavy rain. After the automobile came into more common use by nearly all independent farmers, a period of road improvement began. All main highways are graded up today. Culverts have been put in and workmen are constantly on the job keeping the roads in repair. A new paved highway leading from Buenos Aires to the western extremity of our mission district is now under construction. Within a few years we hope to have a paved highway that passes through a dozen or more of the principal towns occupied by our mission.

Hauling used to be done by immense two-wheeled wagons drawn by a dozen or more horses. In recent years these wagons are seldom seen except in the back lot of some farm home. The modern truck has taken its place. Thousands of trucks now follow the main highways, thus running in competition with the railways in the transfer of freight. The blacksmiths and wagonmakers who once were among the most important business men of the towns and villages are now complaining because their business has been ruined. On the other hand there are many new service garages that do a thriving business.

## CONCLUSION

It is evident from what we have related in the foregoing paragraphs that Argentina is a rapidly developing country. The people are awake to advancement of any kind. Each year the requirements for employment in good business offices are more rigid. The youth must attend school if he wants to secure a good position. Many new forms of employment are being developed. New methods of work are being used.

And while general conditions are changing rapidly, the spiritual needs of the people are as great as ever. The missionary must keep abreast with the times so as to adapt his methods to the people whom he wishes to contact. Since there are better educational facilities today there are more people who know how to read and write. This is a distinct advantage to mission work. To meet the demand for good reading matter our mission has increased its capacity to provide good tracts and good Christian literature of various sorts. As education increases, evils of all kinds increase in like proportion. There are more movies, more high-class drinking places, more amusement parks with their money-grabbing devices, more horseracing, and all of these things are promoted by a modern type of advertising that attracts the unwary youth. Thus temptation in all of its varying forms must be combated by the Christian worker. While these changes take place, we remember that "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." He is still the ideal Master whose message is always sufficient for humanity.

CHAPTER XII

# THE FUTURE ARGENTINE MENNONITE CHURCH

## Opinions of the Argentine National Workers

## EDITED BY L. S. WEBER

It was thought that this volume would not be complete without giving our readers the privilege of knowing our national workers, not only by contemplating their photographs but also by perusing the products of their pens. We had hoped that each one of them could present a written message, but since space is limited, the contribution of only some representative workers will be included.

All those who have written had the same topic assigned to them, that of the future of our church in this country. It is evident that considerable individualism entered into their writings, resulting in a great variety of opinions on the same subject. Brother Luayza is getting along in years, and so naturally is better qualified to look back than into the future. Brother Gorjón is in the prime of his usefulness, of a very philosophic mind, and unable to make a speech or write an article without using the word "idiosyncrasies." Sister Elvira Armenino is our trained nurse who knows what she believes, and what she plans to do will demonstrate the practical side of the Gospel message. Brethren Cavadore and Piñeyro seem to show the deeper spiritual side of things, being convinced that the important factors in the future of our work are prayer, Holy Spirit, and the need of a genuine revival. The one point on which they all agree is that the Argentine Church should become financially independent in the near future. That is what all of us have been hoping for during the years, but we fear sometimes that they confuse self-support and self-propagation with independent self-government.

In the translation of these opinions it has been our purpose to convey the writers' thoughts faithfully with the result that

the English form and idiom may not always be accurate. In a few cases it was necessary to edit the material presented in order to make it fit into the general purpose of this chapter. We trust that the optimism of these brethren may be enhanced by the prayers and gifts of God's people so that the aspirations of the most confident may really come to fruition.

## THE FUTURE ARGENTINE MENNONITE CHURCH

BY ELVIRA ARMENINO

In reference to the future of our church I am optimistic because I believe that the seed sown in the hearts of the people for so long a period will produce more abundant fruit than up to the present.

I believe in my Argentine Church, and by this I mean that I believe in all of those who compose her membership; I believe them to be able to realize her advancement. The Lord has many souls here whom He wishes to save, and therefore needs more workers. I am convinced that God will call such as will surrender themselves to do His work.

I believe that the church requires the active service of all her members, and for that reason it seems to me we are not far from the time when every lay member will be a personal worker.

I believe that the work carried on by the Sunday school for so many years will bring fruit in the lives of those who began to attend in their childhood, are young people now, and will be leaders in the church of tomorrow. I know that the work of the Sunday school is effective.

I believe that the educative, literary, and spiritual work of the Young People's Meeting will bring results which really are visible already, and for that reason we shall be able to count on a better prepared leadership.

I believe that every woman in our church is not only a housekeeper but that she ought to be an efficient helper in the activities of the church. I believe that she is capable and will perform an effective part in the work. I believe that as time goes on she will realize her responsibility in beautifying the church with her service.

I firmly believe in a missionary church, and would like to visualize the future Argentine Church as such.

Finally, I believe that my church in the future will find herself better qualified to render a wider service to society in general than she is doing now. She will have sufficient resources to extend her influence beyond what we have thought were her limits. She will be able to extend a helping hand not only spiritually but also in an economical, moral, and cultural way. I can visualize the day when she will have a center of her own where she can gather abandoned children to give them food, clothing, shelter, and instruction. She will be able to help the sick who are abandoned for lack of funds or because of ignorance. She will extend a willing hand to help mothers who do not know how to bring up and care for their children. She will be able to help the unemployed to some useful work. In fact, I believe she will be capable of giving a practical solution to social and economic problems as well as to the greater moral and spiritual issues. Therefore, I look upon my church as the one the Apostle Paul describes as "pure and without spot," one which will be "ample, effective, active, and missionary."

## THE FUTURE ARGENTINE MENNONITE CHURCH

BY ALBANO LUAYZA

On January 2, 1943, it will be twenty-five years that I had my first interview with Brethren Hershey and Shank in the city of Nueve de Julio where I had been appointed to open Gospel work. I told these brethren that if they opened mission work in Pehuajó it would be possible to go from there west to Santa Rosa and then south to Bahia Blanca. Part of this has already been accomplished, but we still have to enter the towns of the South where, even though there are some evangelical groups working, there are many towns we could occupy.

Undoubtedly it is very difficult to make a prophecy of what our churches will be in another twenty-five years, but it is possible to say certain things even though we may be mistaken as to details. If we can inculcate in our members of the thirty established churches a deeper spiritual life and a more fervent desire to be true witnesses for Christ, fulfilling His mandate

which He gave before His ascension, the number of churches and members will be greatly increased in another twenty-five years. They should reach all the way from Buenos Aires to La Pampa without leaving any towns unoccupied. Towards the northwest we should have churches all the way from Buenos Aires to Salto, to Villegas, to Victorica, and even to Mendoza. The work established in the Province of Córdoba should be extended to include all the towns where the Gospel has not been preached.

With our eyes fixed on Christ, and in the words of Caleb, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30). That is, we will overcome the world with its sin if we keep our eyes fixed on our Captain. If every one of the present pastors will do his part in inculcating a more fervent desire to be useful in the service of Christ and His church, we shall be able to triumph, and when another twenty-five years will have gone by, if the Lord does not return for His own before then, we should have about five thousand active members.

## THE FUTURE ARGENTINE MENNONITE CHURCH

BY ERNESTO PIÑEYRO

It is really a privilege for me, as I believe it also is for my colaborers, to express our aspirations for the blessed work of the Lord in this our native land. Thanks to God, and let His name be praised, that I heard the holy Gospel of peace in my youth, and through its power I was liberated from the darkness of Satan. With the help of our Lord Jesus Christ I desire to give my whole life to Him, that He may use me as an instrument in His kingdom here on earth.

Here in Argentina there is a very extensive field for the work of the Lord, and we are glad to say that there is liberty granted for announcing the Gospel. But in spite of the present favorable conditions we should be looking towards the future of our church, laying a firm basis today for the church of tomorrow so that those who are studying in our Sunday schools and those who will attend in the future may be able to continue maintaining the stability of the church.

Our brethren in the United States and Canada along with the self-denying missionaries who are among us are doing everything that is possible, humanly speaking. We are deeply grateful because they have brought us the blessed Gospel of the Lord. As the years pass we should not remain indifferent to what our brethren have brought us, but we should make it produce something.

We need to learn once for all time that every member of the church is responsible for the work of the Lord. Since our brethren have brought us the Gospel with self-denial every Argentine believer should contribute to the work so that the missionaries can carry the message to other hearts. For this the church here should be independent and self-supporting, but how can we realize this? It will certainly be difficult but not impossible. As the years go by, I am convinced more and more that there should be a sense of responsibility on the part of our members, not only in the matter of their personal lives but also in their financial obligations. Only in this way will it be possible for the Argentine Church to support her own program. But if we lack in spirituality it will be difficult to realize this sense of responsibility.

One of the important things for the benefit of the future church will be the preparation of more of the members to be consecrated workers by means of Bible study, to meet the needs of the church of tomorrow.

Another factor that will give stability and force to our future church is that there be a spirit of intimate union and co-operation between ourselves, the national workers, and the missionaries. It is necessary that the Holy Spirit dwell in all of us with His power, using our capacities wisely which will solve many of our problems and assure a glorious future for our church.

## THE FUTURE ARGENTINE MENNONITE CHURCH

BY FELICIANO GORJÓN

On the completion of twenty-five years since the founding of the Mennonite Church in the Argentine Republic under the leadership of the pastors Hershey and Shank, we have been asked to write something about the future of this church.

A retrospective view helps us to realize fully that the Argentine Mennonite Church has made notable progress, that is, she finds herself in an upward trend towards the realization of her evangelizing, educative, and missionary responsibility. As one looks to the future, it is reasonable to expect better things and more promising times.

It is true that present international conditions do not allow us to be too optimistic about the future of the work. Nevertheless it is not bad enough to be pessimistic. Referring to the historic testimony of the early church, who would have thought that the persecution by her enemies could serve to stimulate that unlimited propagation of the Gospel of Christ? In spite of the devastating and merciless persecution to which she was subjected she grew and "the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved." The same thing should and can happen in our dark times. We should be ready for the worst.

The present international condition also affects the financial and economic life of the church since up to the present we depend on the mother church. But even this serious difficulty should not hinder the forward march of the church. On the contrary it should teach us to walk without clinging to the arms of the mother church in the United States and Canada which are being affected by the war. Personally I believe the time has come that the evangelical churches in Argentina, and ours amongst them, will have to face their economic problems by their own means and resources if they expect to survive the present crisis. The future of the church depends on her attitude toward this problem.

The matter of first importance for the Argentine Mennonite Church is that she develop a profound and intensive spiritual life of unconditional loyalty to Him who gave Himself for her. The next step will be to make herself financially and economically independent from the mother church in North America. Only after she becomes self-supporting can she expect to become self-governing. She owes a great debt of gratitude to the mother church for her very life and existence, but she should soon be able to organize and govern herself in harmony with her local necessities and idiosyncrasies. It is certain that the Argentine Mennonite Church has not achieved that which we

TOP: Pablo and Marcelina M. de Cavadore
SECOND: Constancio and Herlinda de Herrera
THIRD: Carlos and Celina H. de Barbosa

have sketched briefly here, yet the time will come, and that in the near future, when she will realize this. For the present it is sufficient to know that she has a longing to become financially free from the mother church. The national pastors are aware of the fact that the church here will not do her best until she becomes indigenous.

Lastly, I would say that even though for the present we do not have lay preachers that does not mean that we shall not have them in the near future. In some of our congregations we already have signs of the rising of this class of preachers. In reference to the future workers, I am fully assured that they will be better prepared intellectually and spiritually for the ministry, because our Bible School will be in better condition to train our workers than heretofore.

## THE FUTURE ARGENTINE MENNONITE CHURCH

BY PABLO CAVADORE

In the critical times through which we are passing it is very difficult to predict what our church will be in years to come. Who can tell what kind of social, political, and economical changes will come upon us? What systems will be in vogue after this war? Will democracy become prevalent, will communism impose itself, or will we have to live under a national-socialist rule? There are those who believe that whatever the outcome of the war, it will be necessary to change the capitalistic and competitive tendency for a program of greater justice and equity.

We already know that under a democratic rule the progress of the church is not hindered, but if we would have to live under a system of force, whatever its ideology, the church as an institution and its members would have to suffer trials and persecutions similar to those of other ages.

What we have said so far refers to the church in general, but we will now turn to the future of the Argentine Church and to the Mennonite Church in particular. The twenty-five years that have passed have been years of preparation. The next twenty-five years will depend on what we have learned in the years gone by. We must admit that nearly all intelligent be-

lievers are aware of the fact that the spiritual life of the church has been and is very unsatisfactory. This is the conviction of the most consecrated among God's people. If the ebb of spiritual life is low at the present, what may we expect of the future church?

We also should admit that the Argentine Mennonite Church is still living at the expense of the church in North America, and it would be venturesome to affirm that her economic independence will be feasible in a brief period of time. With a very few exceptions the congregations would not be able to remunerate the services of the pastors in charge, not even in a moderate way. What can we predict for the future of the church in this matter? Will she grow sufficiently to be able to sustain herself? Since the future is always full of hope we have a right to expect great things in the coming years.

I believe that a happy and prosperous future of the church depends on the coming of a revival which will extend to the whole of her life and activities. It is urgent that a general revival stir all our congregations and towns. Every member, including the ministerial body, will need to feel the responsibility of contributing to this revival, asking for it in fervent prayer. It is more necessary than ever that each member be concerned about his words and actions before God and men.

When each member comes to see in every other person a lost soul who needs to be saved at any cost, seeing the seriousness of continuing without Christ, and when He comes to pray and work according to this feeling, then we can prophesy without mistake something good and noble for the future of the church.

## THE FUTURE ARGENTINE MENNONITE CHURCH

BY CONSTANCIO HERRERA

When we remember that it is only twenty-five years since the first Mennonite missionaries set foot on our soil, and when we note that they already have numerous members, fine places of worship, an Orphanage, a Printery, a clinic, and a Bible School, it gives great encouragement to go forward in the work of the Lord.

This is a new and prosperous country, but in spite of that

fact there is much idolatry and superstition, and many forms of sin and vice abound on every hand.

In my days as a sailor I had the opportunity of navigating to the extreme south of my country where I was able to see a vast field yet to be evangelized. I am acquainted with many towns and cities where I have had the privilege of preaching the good news of salvation. There are many other places where the Gospel is being preached, and yet in order that Argentina may be won for Christ there are many fields still to be entered.

The future of the Mennonite Church in Argentina may be glorious if she continues faithfully in her task. The words of our Master are very true even when applied to this country. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

## THE FUTURE ARGENTINE MENNONITE CHURCH

BY CARLOS BARBOSA

Since our church in Argentina is still in her infancy, it would be premature to form judgments about her future. Whatever we express might be right or wrong, because until she grows out of her childhood we cannot know what form she will take.

I would like to offer some positive as well as negative opinions without pretending that it will have to turn out that way, since I am neither infallible nor of a prophetic turn of mind.

We have quite a few young people of both sexes in our congregations, some of them with a good training, although scarcely any with higher degrees. A large number of children attend our Sunday schools; the members of our churches attend most of our services with devout loyalty and live exemplary lives. We, as a small group of pastors, are working and praying for the advancement of the church, which at the present is like a small bird in the nest, but with the hope of some day soaring to great heights.

Due to the magnitude of the triumphs to be won, it will be necessary to make greater sacrifices, but here is where we fall short. Quite a few young men and women began to study in our Bible School but some of them got discouraged and are now

working as servants in ungodly homes for miserable salaries, and in a few isolated cases they have even lost out in their Christian life and faith. A few young men who had completed several years of study have gone to other evangelical groups. During several years the Bible School did not function for lack of interest on the part of young members.

The economic resources of our local churches are not any too encouraging, and even though we should not judge the members by their offerings it is evident that we cannot give of our means until we have given ourselves. I have heard some tithing members remark: "Since I give a tithe to the Lord, I have more left than before, therefore I do not wish to fail in my giving." I believe this is a very selfish way to give. We should not give to receive more in return but rather to serve and to fulfill our responsibility towards God and our fellow men. Our so-called Twenty-Year Plan of self-support is a demonstration of what I am saying, seeing that we are far from realizing it. We need to be men and women of action, ready to make sacrifices, to pray and deny ourselves so that God can use us. Young people with a clear vision of their responsibility towards lost souls and towards God, by depending on the heavenly Father, will be able to give us a glorious future. A real giving up of all selfish feelings linked with a complete consecration, will avoid a dark and inglorious future.

When another twenty-five years will have gone by, our church will have a few gray hairs, the symbol of experience, and will then be better able to sing praises to the Lord for the achievement of greater triumphs.

## THE FUTURE ARGENTINE MENNONITE CHURCH

BY ANITA CAVADORE

It is extremely difficult to predict the future of the church in these days when the world is passing through very trying times, politically, economically, and socially. The world seems to have fallen into a chaotic condition without a way of escape, but I believe that everything depends on the faithfulness of God's children. If the faith of the Argentine Mennonite Church is founded on "the Rock which is Christ," no matter

if adverse winds and worldly floods rise against her, they will not be able to make her waver. She will come through it all triumphantly, depositing precious sheaves at the feet of the Lord in the glorious day of His appearing.

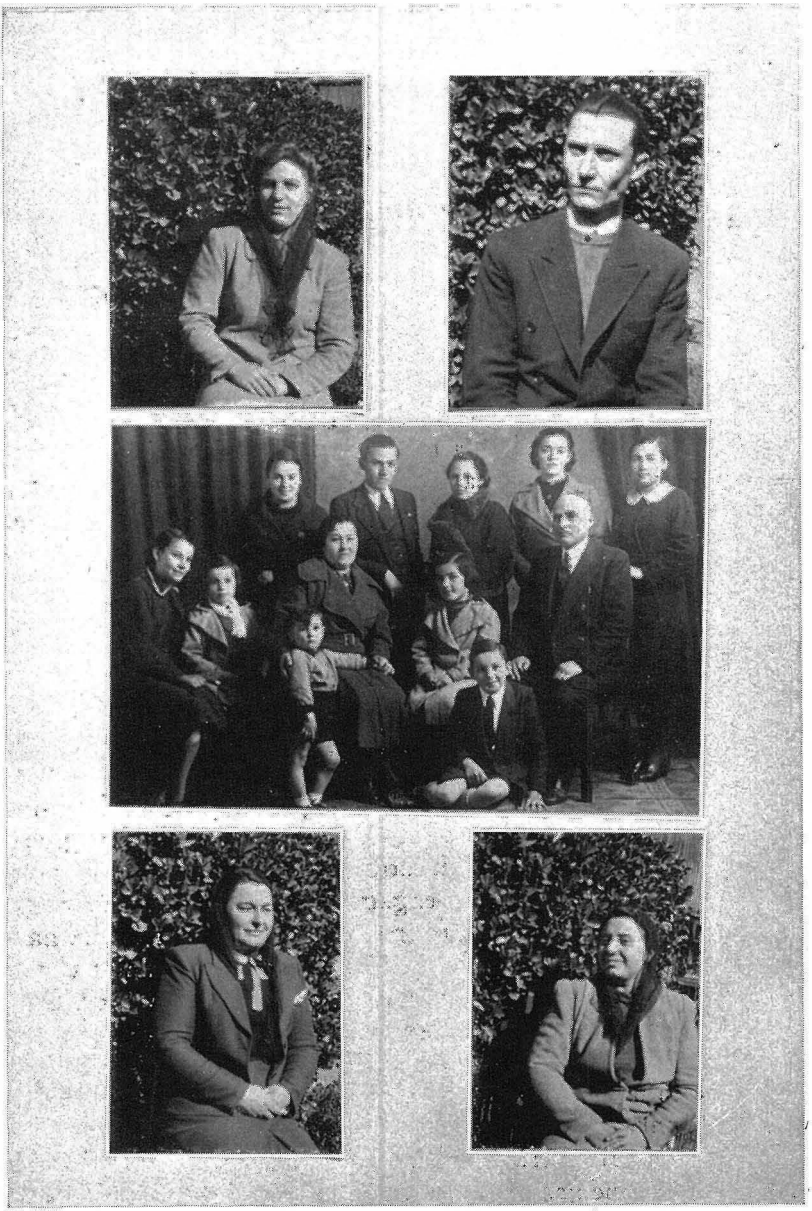
I am one of those who saw the beginning of this work and I praise the Lord that in spite of difficulties we can say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." I have seen our church extend her borders on every side, valiantly lifting on high the glorious banner of the cross. I believe the next twenty-five years will show a more extensive growth when we take into account the increasing number of homes, where the children are being instructed in the Gospel. The young people who have grown up in the Sunday school have a better foundation than those who started twenty-five years ago. We now have better workers, having been trained in our Bible School.

One of the qualities to be developed further would be that humility which has characterized our church from the beginning, that lovely humility and simplicity of Christ. Another necessary factor will be to preach the Gospel in all its purity. If we believe, "with God all things are possible."

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF ARGENTINE NATIONAL WORKERS

ALBANO LUAYZA was born June 14, 1888. He comes from an evangelical family. His aged father who is still living has given all his children a Christian education. Several of Don Albano's brothers and sisters are also engaged in direct Christian work among the Baptists. In the fourth grade Brother Luayza had Juan Varetto, now a distinguished Baptist preacher and pastor, as teacher. While in military service at the age of twenty, God called him to another kind of service, and Brother Luayza answered with the following words: "It seems that the Lord has called me to use the Sword of His Word and of His Spirit. I will fence only with it."

His special Bible training was taken at the Alliance School in Azul, where he graduated in 1918. From then on until 1921 he worked with that denomination, mostly in the town of 9 de Julio. In this year he and his wife became acquainted with Brethren Shank and Hershey, and being attracted by the dis-



TOP: Juan and Isabel P. de Battaglia
SECOND: Albano Luayza and family
THIRD: Anita Cavadore; Maria Cavadore

tinctive doctrines and practices of our church, were received as members and workers and were stationed in the city of Santa Rosa where they labored strenuously until March 1939. Since then they have worked in Alberti until June 1942 when they began a new work in Ramos Mejía, a suburb of Buenos Aires.

Since its beginning, in 1932, Brother Luayza has been the editor of the official periodical of our mission, *La Voz Menonita* (*The Mennonite Voice*), undoubtedly the first Mennonite paper ever to be published in Spanish.

QUERUBINA RAMÓN DE LUAYZA is also from a Christian family, born August 20, 1891, in Olavarría, in the southern part of the province of Buenos Aires. She has faithfully accompanied her husband in the various places where they have served. Being a graduated primary schoolteacher, she has applied her many talents to the problems of the work and also in the rearing of a family of ten children, six of whom are already over twenty years of age. Their names according to ages are: Inés Querubina, Nohemí Ruth, Elizabeth Christina, Albano Elisha, Raquel Lidia, Haydeé Eunice, Benjamín Hugo, Esther Dora, Beatriz Edith, and Ramón Enrique. Inés is a trained midwife working in the Public Health Department in Santa Rosa. Nohemí is married to a lawyer and lives in Formosa, Argentina. The rest are either employed or in school.

PABLO CAVADORE was born on January 26, 1902, in Chivilcoy, province of Buenos Aires. During a number of years after his conversion and baptism, he was engaged as colporteur working in all the towns and villages from Bragado to Santa Rosa. Later he felt the need of more preparation; so he took the regular three-year Bible course offered by our Bible School. He was graduated in 1930 and was ordained in Carlos Casáres, February 1, 1931. His work as helper and pastor has taken him to Pehuajó, Madero, Passo, Pellegrini, Maza, Lonquimay, Trenque Lauquen, and this year, 1942, to Capilla del Monte in the province of Córdoba.

MARCELINA MICHELLI DE CAVADORE was born in Pehuajó on April 26, 1904. In 1927 she was married to Pablo Cava-

dore; they are the parents of two children: Jorge Abel, aged fourteen, and Julio Wenceslao, aged two. After her conversion Sister Marcelina helped in Pehuajó as an efficient Bible reader. Since her marriage, she has been severly afflicted with rheumatism, which has made it almost impossible for her to do much more than her own housework. But she has been a faithful companion to her husband in his work wherever they have gone.

MARÍA CAVADORE was Bible reader and kindergarten teacher in Carlos Casáres from 1928-1932; in Pehuajó from 1933-1935; and in Trenque Lauquen from 1941 to the present time.

ANITA CAVADORE was the first helper, Bible reader and kindergarten teacher in Trenque Lauquen. When the Snyders were put in charge of the Orphanage, she became "interpreter" and assistant matron for several years there. In 1931 she was sent as the first missionary from the Argentine churches to Pellegrini where she labored faithfully until 1934. At that time help was needed urgently in 30 de Agosto; so she was transferred there where she has worked well ever since.

SANTINA CAVADORE DE MONSALVO is a teacher graduate of the National Normal School, who taught for more than ten years in our Instituto Americano in Pehuajó.

CARLOS BARBOSA was born on November 2, 1903. After his conversion and after his marriage to Celina Heredia in 1927, they both entered the Bible School in Pehuajó, graduating in 1932. As helper he has served short periods in Casáres, Pehuajó, Bragado, Madero, and America, settling later in Martinez de Hoz for one year, and then in Quiroga where they have done a very fine work ever since.

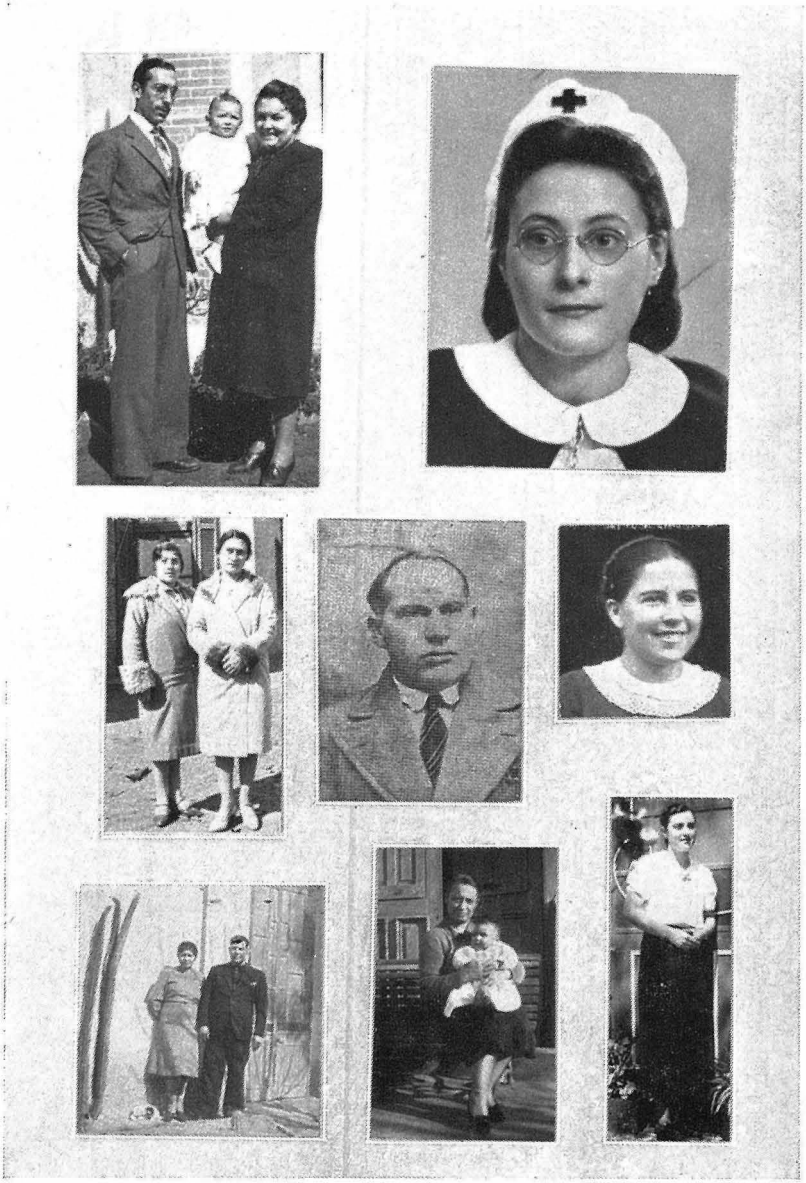
CELINA HEREDIA DE BARBOSA was born October 3, 1904. She also studied in the Bible School with her husband and has faithfully helped in all the towns of their labors. They have had no children of their own, and a little girl whom they had adopted died a few years ago.

FELICIANO GORJÓN, was born in Salamanca, Spain, in 1907, and came to Argentina with his parents at the age of three. After his conversion he married María Paz in Carlos Casáres in 1925, and together they went to the Bible School in Pehuajó. During his years of study he helped in Pehuajó, Trenque Lauquen, and Passo. Later, after graduating in 1932, they took charge of the work in Alberti, French, and now Santa Rosa. In this latter place the work has prospered exceptionally well under their ministry. Plans were made for the ordination of Brethren Gorjón and Barbosa on October 13, 1942, in their home church, Carlos Casáres, during the twentieth anniversary celebration of that church.

MARÍA PAZ DE GORJÓN was born in Carlos Casáres, September 25, 1909. She had served as Bible reader in Carlos Casáres one year before accompanying her husband to the Bible School in Pehuajó. Their family consists of five boys whose names are the following: Jorge Daniel, Oscar Feliciano, Nelson Julio, Heber Amos, Nestor Elton.

ERNESTO PIÑEYRO became interested in the Gospel through the literary society in Trenque Lauquen. He took the studies which the night school offered for a few years in that church; then he went to the Bible School in Bragado in 1935. After a year of school he was married and moved to Buenos Aires where he and his wife found employment for several years. In 1939 our mission employed Brother and Sister Piñeyro as director and matron, respectively, of our Orphanage at Bragado. While busy in this institution, Brother Piñeyro has found time to continue his Bible studies at the Bible School and take charge of branch work in the city of Bragado.

PILAR FERNANDEZ DE PIÑEYRO is a native of Carlos Casáres where she was a teacher in the kindergarten for several years. Since her marriage and the many duties in the Orphanage, she has found it impossible so far to take any studies in the Bible School. Besides the Orphanage family, which they treat as their own, they have one little daughter called Mirta Beatriz, aged one year.



TOP: Ernesto and Pilar F. de Piñeyro; Elvira Armenino
SECOND: Laura Rivas (right) and a friend; José Zagami (deceased); Quintina Guttierez
THIRD: Juan and Isabèl P. de Battaglia; Santina C. de Monsalvo; Angelita D'Amatto

CONSTANCIO HERRERA was born to a Christian family in Madero in 1916. He was converted through the testimony of the Salvation Army during his military service in the navy, at the conclusion of which he was accepted as a worker in that denomination. When he had reached the rank of lieutenant, he offered his services to our church, as he said, "to recompense us for our loss in the death of Brother Zagami whom he had 'pestered' greatly while pastor in Madero." In 1940 he and his wife came to Bragado where they worked in the towns of Ó'Brien and Comodoro Py, later moving to Alberti to take charge of that work, and to Mechita in 1942. In the meantime Brother Herrera is also finishing his schoolwork at the Bible School in Bragado.

HERLINDA L. DE HERRERA was born in a Christian home in La Plata, capital of our province, on February 15, 1914. After taking her theological preparation at the Instituto Model de Obreros Cristianos of the Methodist Church in Buenos Aires and graduating in 1935, she worked in her home church for a few years. In October 1940 she married Constancio Herrera and both were received as members and workers in our mission. Her serenity and culture make a fine complement to her hustling husband.

ANGELITA D'AMATTO served as kindergarten teacher in Tres Lomas for over fifteen years.

LAURA RIVAS served as kindergarten teacher and Bible Reader in Pehuajó and Trenque Lauquen for more than fifteen years.

JUAN BATTAGLIA has been headman of our Printery for over twelve years.

ISABEL PITHAN DE BATTAGLIA was one of the "daughters" of the Orphanage and is now wife of our Printery man. She is an enthusiastic helper in the Trenque Lauquen congregation.

QUINTINA GUTTIEREZ for a number of years had been maid in the Shank home and later became interested in studying the

Bible. She graduated from the Bible School in 1932. Since then she has helped in the Orphanage in Bragado, and now is working in the towns of Passo and Madero.

ELVIRA ARMENINO was a "daughter" of the Orphanage until 1932. For a short time she taught in the kindergarten in Trenque Lauquen later going to America with the Snyder family for the same purpose. In 1936 she entered the Bible School in Bragado and was graduated in 1938. While studying, she helped as monitress in the Orphanage. Then for one year she took charge of the work in the town of Smith after which she entered the Medical School of the University of Buenos Aires, from which she graduated as a visiting nurse. She is taking some extra courses in preparation for her work in our clinic. During her student years in Buenos Aires, she has helped as much as possible in our work in that city.

JOSÉ ZAGAMI came to us from the Free Brethren church, having worked in our district as a colporteur. He was accepted as a worker and together with his family moved to Tres Lomas in 1930. After fifteen months of work there and in the surrounding district, he was transferred to Madero as pastor of the congregation where he served faithfully for several years. On account of failing health and sickness, causing considerable suffering, he died there on February 12, 1936, at the age of forty-eight years. He was an humble man of prayer depending upon the Lord for guidance and sustenance in the smallest matters. Since his passing his wife and family have returned to the city of San Luis where she has relatives.